

## Internalization of Religious and Social Character through the Islamic Building and Character Building Programs (A Case Study at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang)

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### Abstract

In response to the growing prevalence of moral degradation within educational environments, there is an urgent need for effective solutions. This study focuses on exploring the values embedded within the Islamic Building and Character Building programs, the models of value internalization, and the implications of religious and social character development for students. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed to narrow the broad research scope into a specific, in-depth area of investigation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data analysis was carried out through data display, condensation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the values internalized through the Islamic Building and Character Building programs play a significant role in reinforcing students' religious character and social awareness. The Islamic Building program encompasses values such as faith, worship, morality, steadfastness (*istiqamah*), and brotherhood (*ukhwah*), while the Character Building program emphasizes leadership, empathy, creativity and innovation, collaboration, and responsibility. A variety of activities were designed to foster a conducive learning environment, including the implementation of the 5S routine (smile, greet, salute, polite, and courtesy), recitation of prayers before and after lessons, collective performance of Duha and Dhuhr prayers, a Qur'an memorization (tahfiz) program, the internalization of a sense of shame towards misconduct, and character development led by homeroom teachers. The internalization programs positively impacted students'

character, as evidenced by greater consistency in religious observances, stronger adherence to school rules, improved discipline, and a heightened sense of social responsibility.

**Keywords:** Internalization of character values; Islamic Building and Character Building Programs; Religious and Social Character

## INTRODUCTION

Amidst the massive waves of modernization and globalization, the degradation of moral values has increasingly become a tangible threat (Sunarso, 2020). The phenomenon of moral decline, such as bullying, harassment, promiscuity, theft, habitual cheating, defiance against teachers, and other forms of moral degradation, has become a persistent social problem that requires comprehensive and sustained solutions (Hamim et al., 2021). Two of the most frequent cases occurring within educational settings are bullying among students and the decline of respect towards teachers. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Federation of Indonesian Teachers Associations (FSGI) indicate that bullying remains a persistent threat for school-aged children. The types of bullying most commonly experienced include physical violence (55.5%), verbal bullying (29.3%), and psychological bullying (15.2%). Elementary schools (SD) recorded the highest percentage of bullying victims at 26%, followed by junior high schools (SMP) at 25%, and senior high schools (SMA) at 18.75% (Sekolah Relawan, 2024).

One tragic case occurred in Subang, where a third-grade elementary school student died after being assaulted by three older students. The victim had fallen into a coma and suffered brain stem death, which ultimately led to the inability to save his life. This incident took place in November 2024. Prior to his death, the victim had reported experiencing physical violence at the hands of the three senior students (Detik Jabar, 2024). The perpetrators in this incident were elementary school students, meaning they were still underage with unstable psychological conditions. Therefore, it is crucial to internalize the religious character and social awareness from an early age.

Another case that has occurred is the loss of respect from students towards teachers (Pratama, 2023). One of the cases that caused a stir in the education world was the incident in which a student assaulted a teacher to the point of death in 2018. This event occurred at SMA Negeri 1 Torjun-Sampang during a class session. Budi, an art teacher, reprimanded a

student with the initials HI for defacing his classmates' paintings. Offended by the reprimand, HI immediately struck Budi. Budi experienced pain, and the principal allowed him to leave early. A few hours after returning home, Budi fell into a coma and was later reported to have passed away (Sohuturon, 2018).

Recently, a video circulated showing a junior high school student defying his teacher when being counseled. The video depicted the student responding to the teacher with an angry tone and disrespectful behavior (Sofyana, 2024). There are many other cases of moral degradation, both those exposed in the media and those that remain unreported. This situation is deeply concerning for all parties, as the younger generation, who are meant to be the nation's successors, is currently facing a moral crisis.

In response to the various cases of moral degradation currently occurring, it is crucial to internalize character values from an early age. Internalization refers to the assimilation, deep understanding, and mastery of values through guidance, mentoring, and other similar processes. This means that internalization is a profound process through which the values learned by students are integrated with the broader values of education, becoming part of the students' personalities, thus forming a unified character. Internalization is also central to personality change, representing a critical dimension of human development, which encompasses the formation of character and how individuals respond during the character-building process. (Idris, 2017).

Internalization is essentially a learning process, involving the instillation of knowledge, attitudes, feelings, skills, and values. These elements are not only meant to be understood and possessed, but more importantly, the values must become integrated with the individual's personality (Iwan, 2023). Koentjaraningrat argues that internalization is a process that occurs throughout an individual's life, from birth until the end of their life. This is because the process of internalization is not static; rather, it is a dynamic process that continues throughout the individual's lifetime. (Iwan, 2023).

The term "character" itself is derived from the Greek word "charassein," which means "to engrave" or "to carve." The nature of engraving is that it firmly adheres to the object it is carved upon. This characteristic ensures that an engraving does not easily wear out over time and is resistant to friction. Thus, in linguistic terms, character is understood as moral strength or mental quality (Tanaka et al., 2023). It is essential to internalize character values from an early age, as character is the outcome of a continuous process of habituation.

Character is an inherent part of human potential, present from birth, and is biologically or genetically determined. However, Ki Hajar Dewantara argues that the actualization of character is a synthesis of biological traits and the results of an individual's interactions with their environment. Education plays a pivotal role in shaping character, as it serves as an effective means to awaken individuals to their true identity (Hamim et al., 2021).

Character education is an effort that must be systematically designed and implemented in order to assist students in understanding human behavior values related to the Almighty God, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, the nation, and the state. Students' understanding of these values should be reflected in their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, words, and actions, based on religious norms, laws, ethics, manners, culture, and customs adhered to (Azzet, 2011). According to John W. Santrock, character education is a direct approach to students regarding moral education, which teaches moral values to prevent students from engaging in immoral behavior that could harm themselves and others (Santrock, 2011).

It is a widely accepted view that the primary educational environment is the family, often referred to as the informal educational environment. However, there are times when families are unable to shield their children and end up entrusting their education entirely to formal institutions, namely schools. Therefore, it is not surprising that today, the most sought-after schools are those that integrate general education with religious education, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, with the goal of ensuring that students develop not only intellectually, but also emotionally and spiritually. The presence of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah provides a strategic solution to address various issues related to student morality. In addition to broadening students' knowledge of religion, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah also internalizes values of *akhlakul karimah* (noble character), making it increasingly relevant amidst the challenges of globalization, which often leads to shifts in values and behaviors within society.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Internasional Sabilillah Sampang functions as an educational stronghold that internalizes religious values while also nurturing a sense of social responsibility. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Internasional Sabilillah Sampang offers several flagship programs, one of which is character development, detailed into Islamic Building and Character Building. At the beginning of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Internasional Sabilillah was appointed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kankemenag) of Sampang Regency as a pilot madrasah for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This designation indicates that the madrasah was deemed capable

of executing the new curriculum, which not only focuses on learning but also on character strengthening.

Previous studies relevant to the topic at hand show that the implementation of religious character education includes three activities: habituation before, during, and after the learning process. The implications of religious culture include students becoming accustomed to the habituation programs at the madrasah, many students memorizing Juz 30 and daily prayers, as well as students maintaining their character by displaying disciplined, neat, and clean behavior (Akhmad, 2020). Similarly, the attitude of social responsibility is also internalized through habituation and exemplification. One of the ways this is achieved is through sharing programs, which help students develop empathy and concern for others. (Subekhan et al., 2023).

While this study focuses on exploring the values within the Islamic Building and Character Building programs, the model of value internalization, and the implications of religious and social character internalization on the students' character at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang. Using a case study approach, this research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the values and offer insights into the model of value internalization as well as its implications for students. This study is important for understanding how Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can significantly contribute to shaping a generation with religious character and social responsibility amidst the increasingly complex social changes.

## **METHODS**

The researcher employs a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a research method based on postpositivism or interpretive philosophy, used to study natural conditions of objects, where the researcher serves as the key instrument. Data collection techniques are carried out through triangulation, which combines observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained is qualitative and analyzed inductively. The results of qualitative research may include findings of potential, uniqueness of the object, meaning of an event, processes and social interactions, construction of phenomena, and hypothesis findings (Sugiyono, 2021). The qualitative approach is chosen because it is suitable for exploratory research and capable of developing a detailed understanding (Creswell, 2012).

The research design used is a case study. Anderson et al. define a case study as an intensive and in-depth analysis conducted to describe a group of individuals, an institution, or a phenomenon occurring within society. Essentially, a case study focuses on in-depth research of a specific situation, differing from surveys that rely on statistical data. The researcher employs this design to narrow the scope of a broad study into a specific topic that is easier to investigate in detail (Maimun, 2020).

The research subjects are informants who will provide data and information related to the research focus. The research subjects are selected using purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling method based on specific considerations or qualifications (Sugiyono, 2021). Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Observation was conducted by observing activities at MII Sabilillah Sampang. Interviews were conducted by asking questions to informants, namely Mrs. Mirhamida Rahmah, Mrs. Imanul Khoiroh, Mr. Ainur Farhan, and the class teacher. Documentation involved gathering data such as the academic calendar, daily activity schedules, and documentation of program implementation. These three techniques were employed to understand the environment, culture, and student behavior at MII Sabilillah Sampang. The instruments used in data collection were based on the indicators of the success of the school and class in internalizing religious and social caring character.

This research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang, starting from February 5, 2025, to April 26, 2025. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model. According to Miles and Huberman, the actions in qualitative data analysis are performed interactively and continuously until saturation is reached. The activities in this data analysis model include condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Condensation or data reduction is the process of summarizing, selecting, and simplifying the data obtained from the research results. Data display is the process of organizing and presenting data in a more structured form to facilitate understanding. Conclusion drawing is the final stage of data analysis, where the researcher interprets the meaning of the data that has been reduced and displayed (Sugiyono, 2021).

## RESULTS

**Table 1.** Observation Results of Activities at MII Sabilillah Sampang.

No.	Activities	Implemented		Description
		Already	Not yet	
1.	5S (smile, greet, salute, polite, and courtesy)	✓		The implementation of 5S is conducted by all members of the madrasah community.
2.	The development of religious character and social awareness by the class teacher	✓		Character development is provided by each class teacher before the commencement of the lessons.
3.	Prayers are conducted before and after the lessons	✓		Prayers are conducted collectively before and after the lessons.
4.	Duha prayer performed in congregation	✓		It is carried out in each class before the commencement of lessons.
5.	Zuhr prayer performed in congregation	✓		It is held in the madrasa's prayer room during the midday break.
6.	Memorization of the Qur'an	✓		It is specifically allocated to the tahfiz class, while other classes are accustomed to reading Juz 30
7.	Al-Qur'an bil Qolam	✓		Qur'an learning with the bil Qolam method is integrated into the curriculum as a subject.
8.	Commemoration of Islamic religious holidays	✓		PHBI is implemented according to the madrasa's academic calendar.
9.	Adequate facilities are available for worship	✓		The madrasa provides a prayer room, ablution facilities, the Qur'an, and other necessary amenities.
10.	Students respect the teachers	✓		Students smile and bow their heads when meeting teachers outside of class hours.
11.	Students show care and empathy towards their fellow classmates	✓		Students interact well, offering assistance such as lending stationery and other items.
12.	Students engage in social caring actions	✓		Social caring actions are primarily carried out during the month of Ramadan by distributing iftar (takjil).

13.	The madrasa facilitates socially-oriented activities	✓	The madrasa provides extracurricular activities, facilitates the channeling of donations, zakat fitrah payments, annual madrasa programs, and P5 activities.
14.	The teacher sets an example	✓	The teacher is disciplined, arrives on time, and maintains orderly administration.
15.	Evaluation of the Islamic Building and Character Building programs	✓	Evaluation is conducted every Saturday at the end of the week, outside of class hours..

### Values in the Islamic Building and Character Building Programs

The Islamic Building program is an effort to internalize Islamic values in students, starting with basic Islamic religious theories and practical applications. Activities in the Islamic Building program include performing Duha and Zuhur prayers in congregation, Qur'an memorization (Tahfiz), Qur'an bil Qalam, and other worship practices. Meanwhile, Character Building focuses on the formation of students' character from an early age, which includes values such as good manners, discipline, and social awareness through madrasa activities.

The Islamic Building program is based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. The core values in this program include Tawhid (monotheism), worship, morality (Akhlak), steadfastness (Istiqamah), and Islamic brotherhood (Ukhuwah Islamiyah). The value of Tawhid is demonstrated before starting lessons, as evidenced by the Duha prayer and collective prayers at the beginning of each class. Mrs. Mirhamida Rahmah, the head of the elementary madrasa, stated, *"Before learning, students are accustomed to performing the Duha prayer in congregation, followed by prayers and reading the Qur'an. The aim is to ensure that every step we take is blessed by Allah, leading to positive effects on students' psychology. We hope that students become calmer and more focused in their studies. It is equally important that students understand that success comes from Allah."*

The value of worship is reflected in the practical worship activities, such as performing ablution, praying in congregation, praying, reading and memorizing the Qur'an, and even simulating the Hajj pilgrimage. The goal is to accustom students to perform acts of worship from an early age. Mr. Ainur Farhan, the vice-principal of student affairs, explained, *"Perhaps at this stage, they pray not out of personal desire, but because of madrasa rules. However, this habit will stay*

*with them as they grow older. This is what will make them obedient servants.*" The implementation of worship activities in the madrasa is directly monitored by each class's homeroom teacher, making the activities more conducive and focused. The internalization of religious values must be balanced with a supportive environment to ensure that these values are effectively embedded and practiced in students' daily lives. (Dahlan, 2022).

The value of Akhlak (moral character) is instilled in students from the moment they enter the madrasa gate. MII Sabilillah Sampang conducts the 5S (smile, greet, salute, polite, and courtesy) activities every morning. Observations show that teachers take turns performing the 5S activities according to their duty schedules. Through these activities, students learn how to respect teachers, and even outside class hours, they greet teachers politely. This activity also benefits teachers by training their discipline, as they have to arrive earlier for their 5S duty. Additionally, students are taught to feel shame in situations such as using foul language, lying, disrespecting parents and teachers, or fighting.

The value of Istiqamah (steadfastness) is empirically seen in the consistency of program implementation. Based on observations, students in grade 1 MI continue to perform the Duha prayer in congregation in class, even without the presence of the homeroom teacher. Mr. Ainur Farhan explained, *"The habits we instill in students must become a system that runs consistently. So even without a teacher monitoring, the Duha prayer should still be performed. This ensures that they remain steadfast in performing positive actions."* The researcher also found that students are given a writing Qur'an, where the script is faint and the task is to trace the letters, helping students become accustomed to writing Arabic letters.

The value of Ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) is also instilled in students through the practice of congregational prayers. Students line up orderly to perform ablution before prayer. A student is appointed as the imam in rotation. After prayer, students greet each other and pray together. Mrs. Imanul Khoiroh, the vice-principal for curriculum, explained, *"The value of Ukhuwah Islamiyah is not only seen in the practical worship activities, but also through other activities that prioritize cooperation and collaboration. We also organize large-scale activities like the Educational Concert held every year."* Brotherhood is taught from an early age, so students feel a sense of ownership towards one another. As a result, students become more collaborative and socially active.

Meanwhile, the values in the Character Building program include leadership, empathy, creativity and innovation, collaboration, and responsibility. Leadership skills are developed

through various activities at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Internatioal Sabilillah Sampang, starting from class structure formation, cooperative learning, to extracurricular activities. Mrs. Mirhamida Rahmah, the madrasa head, said, *“The values in the Character Building program equip students with integrity. MII Sabilillah students must possess skills in various fields. Therefore, we provide various life skills programs to facilitate students’ talents and serve as a platform to sharpen their leadership abilities.”*

Students are taught empathy or care for others through donation channels and sharing programs. This helps students develop empathy, particularly toward their surrounding environment. The researcher observed that during Ramadan, students are taught to share food with the public before iftar. Students are also taught to give charity and pay their zakat fitrah. Mr. Ainur Farhan mentioned, *“Empathy and care for others must be nurtured from an early age so that when they grow older, they become generous individuals who do not look down upon others.”*

The value of creativity and innovation is in line with the P5 (Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile) program. The madrasa sometimes organizes incidental activities that are not scheduled in the academic calendar. These activities are typically outside of class and integrated with the P5 program. Mrs. Imanul Khoiroh explained, *“To face globalization, we must have competitive power. We often organize annual events like the Educational Concert, which preparation starts three months before the event. Here, we involve all students to contribute. This year’s Educational Concert was held at Trunojoyo Square and included public tests in religious studies, science, and language; fashion shows; drama; dance; badrah; and more.”* This aligns with the study conducted by Batu Bara & Fata (2025), which found that the P5RA (Strengthening of Pancasila Student Profile in Religious Education) project in madrasah ibtidaiyah not only hones students’ life skills but also plays an active role in the internalization of character-building values within the students. These findings underscore the vital importance of the P5RA program in fostering student character development (Batubara & Fata, 2025).

Students are also trained to collaborate, one of the activities being Muamalah Day. Mrs. Mirhamida said, *“It is important to hold fun activities outside the classroom to ensure students can cooperate and collaborate effectively. Similarly, project-based learning in class is also essential.”* Through both in-class and out-of-class activities, students are trained to work together and contribute, ensuring that no student remains passive as everyone plays a role. The value of responsibility in the character-strengthening program helps students mature. The researcher observed that when a fight broke out among students, others intervened, and some reported the incident

to the teacher. When a student fell, others helped. When the class was dirty, all students, not just those on duty, helped clean up the litter. Students are accustomed to taking responsibility for themselves, as well as for the safety and comfort of others.

### **Internalization Model in the Islamic Building and Character Building Programs**

Based on interview findings, character internalization through the Islamic Building and Character Building programs is carried out using various models. Mrs. Ari, a first-grade teacher, stated, *“Character development among students is instilled through daily habituation. As teachers, we must also serve as role models—for instance, by not arriving late to school.”* Mrs. Olif, a second-grade teacher, emphasized, *“A child's character is significantly influenced by their surrounding environment. Therefore, if a child is in a positive environment, their character will likely develop positively as well.”* In planning character education, several key elements must be considered, including teachers as the implementers of activities, students as the primary target of these initiatives, and school committees and parents as partners and supporters in the internalization of character education. (Herdi et al., 2022).

Mrs. Kiki, a third-grade teacher, further explained, *“These young students do not yet fully understand; initially, they engage in prayer and other religious practices simply by imitating others. If they do not participate, they may receive consequences from their teachers. That is why the school provides facilities and actively encourages students to regularly engage in acts of worship.”* The madrasah has established rules and regulations that are deeply embedded in the school culture at MII Sabilillah Sampang. As Mrs. Zulfa, a fourth-grade teacher, shared, *“It is not always easy to teach young children; sometimes I still have to raise my voice to be heard. However, over time, students become accustomed to the school's routine activities. Especially those in grades 4, 5, and 6—they are more independent and capable of being disciplined and taking responsibility for their obligations.”*

According to Mrs. Hafawati, a fifth-grade teacher, *“In my observation, fifth-grade students are quite mature. Their character has developed progressively, and I believe this is the result of repeated exposure to structured routines and school culture, such as the 5S program, Qur'an memorization, and various lifeskills activities they have been involved in since first grade. These have helped shape their individual potential.”* Meanwhile, Mrs. Royhana, a sixth-grade teacher, noted, *“Sometimes students joke around—what they find funny might not be amusing to others, and such jokes may even hurt their peers. In this context, I believe the teacher's role is crucial in instilling moral values, teaching students to distinguish between good and bad behavior.”*

## Implications of the Islamic Building and Character Building Programs on Students' Character Development

The character strengthening program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang, implemented through the Islamic Building and Character Building initiatives, has had a positive impact on student behavior. Based on observations, religious character development, such as the regular performance of Duha and Dhuhr prayers in congregation, the habitual recitation and memorization of the Qur'an, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays has internalized greater discipline in students' worship practices. Mr. Ainur Farhan noted, *"We strive to embed a religious culture within the school so that students take personal responsibility for their religious obligations, especially in regard to prayer."*

In addition to religious character building, the program also strengthens students' social awareness through acts of sharing and giving. As a result, students exhibit increased empathy toward their peers and surrounding environment, enhanced interpersonal communication skills, and improved collaboration, alongside a heightened social spirit and willingness to contribute. Observational data reveal that the continuous and structured cultivation of positive character traits in daily routines has led to a meaningful integration between religious values and social practices.

The Islamic Building and Character Building programs serve as essential foundations for students' character formation and development. Islamic Building emphasizes the internalization of religious practices (ibadah amaliyah), while Character Building focuses on interpersonal interaction and social-emotional growth. Despite these differing areas of emphasis, both programs are inherently interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The following section presents several integrated activities observed during the implementation of these programs:

**Table 2.** Integrated Activities Observed in the Implementation of Islamic Building and Character Building Programs at MII Sabilillah Sampang

No	Activities	Program Focus	Character Value Developed	Description of Implementation
1.	5S (smile, greet, salute, polite, and courtesy)	Character Building	Politeness, social etiquette	Implemented at the school entrance each morning; teachers and students take turns leading.

2.	Congregational Duha and Dhuhr Prayers	Islamic Building	Religious discipline, responsibility	Conducted daily before and after learning hours; supervised by homeroom teachers.
3.	Qur'an Recitation and Memorization/Tahfiz al-Qur'an	Islamic Building	Faith (iman), perseverance, consistency	Students are encouraged to memorize short surahs and practice daily recitation.
4.	Qur'an Writing (bil Qalam)	Islamic Building	Patience, attention to detail	Students copy faded Qur'anic script to improve writing and deepen engagement with the Qur'an.
5.	Social Sharing during Ramadan	Character Building	Empathy, generosity	Students distribute food (takjil) to the public before iftar during the month of Ramadan.
6.	PHBI (Islamic Holiday Celebrations)	Islamic Building	Islamic identity, togetherness	Organized according to the school calendar to commemorate key Islamic events.
7.	Muamalah Day (Social Enterprise Event)	Character Building	Collaboration, initiative, leadership	Students work in teams to simulate real-life transactions and promote cooperation.
8.	Extracurricular and P5 Activities	Character Building	Creativity, innovation, responsibility	Activities include talent showcases, group projects, and life skills training.
9.	Teacher Modeling	Both	Integrity, punctuality, moral guidance	Teachers consistently model good behavior, such as timeliness and respectful communication.
10.	School Cleanliness Participation	Character Building	Responsibility, environmental awareness	All students, not only those on duty, help maintain classroom and school cleanliness.

From the table, it can be observed that the Islamic Building and Character Building programs encompass a variety of activities that have become part of the culture at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang. The impact of these programs is that students are trained to be disciplined and responsible, not only in taking responsibility for themselves but also in caring for others socially.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the researcher concludes that the internalization of religious and social characters embedded within the Islamic Building and Character Building programs trains students to behave in accordance with religious teachings and to interact positively with others. The character values internalized through the Islamic Building program include *faith (iman)*, *worship (ibadah)*, *morality (akhlak)*, *consistency (istikamah)*, and *Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah)*. Meanwhile, the Character Building program promotes values such as *leadership*, *empathy*, *creativity and innovation*, *collaboration*, and *responsibility*. These values are internalized through various activities that have become part of the school culture.

In accordance with Muhaimin's theory of value internalization, the process consists of three stages leading to the integration of values into one's personality and ultimately becoming part of one's character. These stages are: value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization (Muhaimin et al., 1996). Value transformation refers to the initial stage in which teachers merely convey information about positive and negative values to students, primarily through verbal communication. Value transaction represents the next stage, wherein value education occurs through two-way interaction. At this level, teachers not only inform students about right and wrong but also provide real-life examples for students to emulate. Value transinternalization is the final stage, where the values have become internalized and integrated into the student's personality as part of their character.

The internalization process at MII Sabilillah Sampang occurs through these three stages. The value transformation stage is implemented through school regulations, character development by homeroom teachers, and direct instruction, particularly within religious education subjects. The value transaction stage takes place through daily habituation, such as the 5S routine, congregational duha and dhuhr prayers, tahfiz al-Qur'an, and other regular activities. This stage also includes role modeling by teachers through behaviors such as offering greetings, punctuality, and discipline in various responsibilities. Finally, the value transinternalization stage is achieved when the values taught and habituated are fully internalized by the students and become part of their personal character. Students begin to independently apply and embody these values in their daily lives. Internalization through the habituation method is widely implemented in various schools, including at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandung Regency (Hakim, 2022).

This study aligns with the findings of Mashuri et al. (2021), who also describe the value internalization process through the three aforementioned stages. The model of internalizing religious character values in students involves three stages: the value transformation stage (moral knowing), the value transaction stage (moral feeling/moral loving), and the transinternalization stage (moral action). This model is also implemented at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Tulang Bawang (Warisno, 2022). It is further supported by the work of Amin et al. (2024), who emphasize that religious and social activities integrated into the school curriculum foster individuals with broad perspectives grounded in both spiritual and social responsibility. Religious values such as devotion to worship, honesty, and responsibility are transmitted through daily routines, social activities, and tahfiz al-Qur'an programs (Amin et al., 2024).

According to Thomas Lickona, character is not something that develops naturally, but rather must be taught, instilled, and nurtured through an intentional educational process. He emphasizes that character formation requires structured efforts within schools and families to integrate moral values into students' daily experiences and behaviors. (Negara, 2020). The stages of character education internalization according to Thomas Lickona consist of three key components: *Moral Knowing*: At this stage, students are able to distinguish between commendable and reprehensible behavior. It involves cognitive understanding of moral values, enabling students to identify what is right and wrong. *Moral Feeling*: This stage involves developing an emotional attachment to virtuous character traits. A sense of love and appreciation for moral goodness begins to emerge, aligning both heart and mind toward the pursuit of good actions. *Moral Action*: This is the culmination of character education, where students consciously demonstrate respectful, polite, responsible, and other morally commendable behaviors as a result of their internalized understanding and emotional connection to moral values.

The Islamic Building and Character Building programs play a vital role in shaping students' character holistically, encompassing both religious and social dimensions. The Islamic Building program instills Islamic values through the habituation of worship practices, reinforcement of faith (*aqidah*), and moral development (*akhlak*), while the Character Building program fosters social attributes such as responsibility, empathy, and social awareness. The integration of both programs creates an educational ecosystem that supports character formation aligned with Islamic principles and the demands of modern society. Character building through school culture aligns with the study conducted by Prasetya et al. (2021) at

SDIT Qurrata A'yun, which demonstrates that Islamic Culture is implemented through role modeling (exemplary behavior), imitation, habituation, and practical application (Prasetya et al., 2021).

The implications of the Islamic Building program are evident in the enhancement of students' religious character. Through activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'an memorization (*tabfiḥ al-Qur'an*), and other religious practices, students become accustomed to incorporating spiritual values into their daily lives. In line with Lev Vygotsky's theory, cognitive development is fundamentally shaped by an individual's interaction with their environment and community. Vygotsky asserts that social and cultural contexts significantly contribute to the construction of one's knowledge and behavior (Utami, 2016). The development of religious character as a cultural norm within the *madrrasah* provides gradual support in fostering spiritual and moral submission, which serves as the fundamental basis for student behavior.

Meanwhile, the Character Building program exerts a strong influence in shaping students' social character. Activities such as extracurricular/life skills programs, classroom cleaning duties, and charitable initiatives foster empathy and a sense of responsibility toward the social environment. Without the internalization of social concern values, solidarity would not function effectively. The school cultivates students' social awareness by providing guidance, comprehension, and conviction so that this value of social concern may continue to grow and be internalized meaningfully and consciously (Salim et al., 2022)

The implications of character internalization, as evidenced by the research findings of Atin and Maemonah (2022), have shown a positive impact on shaping students' behavior. This is reflected in the students' attitudes and conduct in their daily lives, both within and beyond the school environment.. (Atin & Maemonah, 2022). The study conducted by Akhmad (2020) indicates that the implementation of religious character education involves three key activities: habituation before, during, and after the learning process. The implications of cultivating a religious culture include students becoming accustomed to routine practices at the *madrrasah*, a significant number of students memorizing Juz 30 and daily prayers, and students demonstrating moral integrity through disciplined, orderly, and clean behavior (Akhmad, 2020). Likewise, the development of social care attitudes is fostered through habituation and role modeling. One of the key initiatives is the sharing

program, through which students are trained to develop a sense of empathy and concern for others. (Subekhan et al., 2023).

This is in line with the study conducted by Alfiyah & Hariyadi (2022), which found that the internalization of moral education in strengthening students' Islamic character at MI Perwanida Blitar led to students becoming more respectful and reverent toward elders, polite in behavior, and courteous in speech. Moreover, students demonstrated greater responsibility for their mistakes and shortcomings, as well as increased awareness and care for their school environment, such as by disposing of trash in designated areas (Alfiyah & Hariyadi, 2022). The implementation of character internalization through the application of various methods and strategies has resulted in students who are not only of strong character and broad insight but are also well-prepared to become future generations of the nation with a foundation of religious values (Bali & Fadilah, 2019).

The Islamic Building and Character Building programs have a positive impact on the development of students' character. Amid the challenges of the digital era, which is marked by value disruption, these two programs serve as crucial instruments in shaping a generation that excels not only academically but also possesses strong moral integrity and a high sense of social responsibility. A similar study conducted by Suharyanto demonstrates that the internalization of religious values fosters greater student discipline, orderliness, responsibility, and enthusiasm for learning. (Suharyanto, 2014). In addition, students become more independent, honest, polite, and respectful. (Rohmah, 2019). The results of character internalization are documented by the teachers and reported to the parents, enabling them to monitor their children's character development at the madrasah. (Muslimah et al., 2024).

In addition to the impact of school-based programs, initiatives from the Ministry of Education, such as the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) program, also contribute significantly to strengthening student character. The integration of the Pancasila Student Profile into Islamic character formation among learners has proven to be impactful. Students have developed essential traits such as religious devotion, independence, environmental and social awareness, as well as a strong sense of responsibility (Mahmudah et al., 2023). The internalization of character values, particularly the inculcation of religious character through religious culture, such as extracurricular activities, habituation of good behavior, and moral advice, along with the instillation of values like tolerance and social care, can play a preventive role against bullying behavior among students. Moreover, these efforts have demonstrated a

positive impact in the form of improved interpersonal behavior among learners. Nevertheless, further research is required to explore the implementation of other character values and their potential positive effects, to ensure the sustained prevention of bullying in educational settings (Wahyuningsih Riyadi & Mardi Lestari, 2023).

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged to properly contextualize the findings: (1) subjectivity of the qualitative approach. The study employed a qualitative approach using interviews, observations, and documentation. While this approach provides in-depth insights into the process of character internalization, it is inherently subjective and may not be generalizable to all educational institutions. (2) Absence of quantitative data. This research does not provide quantitative data or percentages to indicate the extent to which students' religious and social care character improved. Therefore, it does not offer measurable statistical evidence of the program's impact. (3) Focus on a single educational institution. The study was conducted solely at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah International Sabilillah Sampang. This limits the generalizability of the findings, as institutional characteristics, cultures, and policies may vary across other schools or madrasahs.

## CONCLUSION

The *Islamic Building* and *Character Building* programs at MII Sabilillah Sampang serve as foundational components in the holistic development of students' character, particularly in fostering religious and social values. The integration of these programs into the school culture promotes spiritual discipline through consistent practices such as daily prayers, *tahfiz al-Qur'an*, and moral instruction, as well as social responsibility through activities like classroom duties, charity events, and interpersonal collaboration. The values internalized include faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadah*), morality (*akhlak*), consistency (*istikamah*), and Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah islamiyah*) on the religious side, and leadership, empathy, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and responsibility on the social side. These values are implemented through structured routines and consistent reinforcement from both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Scientific contributions of the study are: (1) Strengthening the concept of value internalization in character education. This study contributes to the theoretical enrichment of value internalization, particularly through the frameworks of Muhaimin and Thomas

Lickona. By linking the stages of value transformation, transaction, and transinternalization to practical applications in a madrasah setting, the study demonstrates how these theories can be systematically implemented within Islamic educational institutions. (2) Development of an integrative model for religious and social character education. The study offers an integrative model that combines the dimensions of spiritual formation (Islamic Building) and social character development (Character Building). It illustrates how schools can simultaneously internalize religious values and social responsibility through structured routines and school-wide cultural practices.

However, as the study employed a qualitative approach, it does not quantitatively measure the extent of character growth among students. Further research using a mixed-methods or quantitative approach is recommended to evaluate the measurable impact of character education programs on students' behavior. Such studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of character internalization and its long-term effects. Nevertheless, this study contributes valuable insights and can serve as a reference for educational institutions seeking to implement or enhance character education programs grounded in Islamic values and responsive to contemporary societal needs.

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