

# The Internalization of Islamic Character Values Through Morning Routine Activities in Early Childhood Education at TK Dharmawanita Kotanopan

Yumna Sari PRD, Nanda Rahayu Agustia, Rahayu Dwi Utami

## Abstract

This study aims to explore the internalization of Islamic character values through *morning routine* activities in early childhood education at TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings reveal that *morning routine* activities play an important role in shaping Islamic character values in early childhood. The internalization process occurs through continuous habituation, teacher modeling, and guided interaction in a natural school setting. The values developed include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, independence, social care, honesty, and respect. These values are embedded in daily activities such as greeting, praying, reciting short surahs, organizing personal belongings, and interacting with peers.

The study also shows that the effectiveness of character internalization is supported by a religious school culture, consistent teacher role modeling, and parental reinforcement at home. However, challenges such as differences in children's developmental readiness, limited attention span, and varying family support were also identified.

In conclusion, *morning routine* activities represent an effective and contextually relevant strategy for Islamic character education in early childhood settings, as they integrate religious values into meaningful daily experiences.

**Keywords:** *Early childhood education, Islamic character, morning routine, habituation, qualitative study*

Yumna Sari PRD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Islamic Early Childhood Education, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia  
e-mail: yumnasari669@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>

Nanda Rahayu Agustia<sup>1</sup>, Rahayu Dwi Utami<sup>2</sup>

e-mail: [nandarahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id](mailto:nandarahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id)<sup>1</sup> [dwirahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id](mailto:dwirahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)**

**Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era**

## Introduction

Early childhood education is a fundamental phase that plays a crucial role in shaping children's personality development, spirituality, social-emotional skills, language abilities, cognitive growth, and independence. At the kindergarten level, children do not only learn to recognize letters, numbers, colors, and shapes, but also begin to develop habitual behaviors related to greeting others, praying, listening, taking turns, maintaining cleanliness, respecting peers, and responding to adult guidance. Therefore, early childhood education institutions hold a strategic position as the first environment where education, habituation, role modeling, and value reinforcement are integrated. In the context of Islamic education, character formation is inseparable from the objective of developing individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, socially responsible, and accountable to themselves and their environment.

The normative foundation of character education in Indonesia is stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Article 3 affirms that national education aims to develop learners into individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible (Republic of Indonesia, 2003, Article 3). This mandate aligns with the Islamic educational perspective, which places morality (akhlaq) as the core of education. In the Qur'anic perspective, the exemplary character of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the primary model for moral development, as stated in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21, which declares that in the Messenger of Allah there is an excellent example for those who hope for Allah and the Last Day (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d., Al-Ahzab: 21). Thus, Islamic character is not merely theoretical knowledge about right and wrong, but a lived practice manifested in daily behavior.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) standards also emphasize the importance of moral and religious values. Ministerial Regulation of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 5 of 2022 on Graduate Competency Standards states that early childhood learning outcomes include religious and moral values, Pancasila values, physical-motor development, cognitive development, language skills, and social-emotional development (Permendikbudristek, 2022, Appendix). This indicates that the success of early childhood education should not be measured solely by early academic abilities, but also by the development of religiosity, discipline, politeness, cooperation, and empathy. This is particularly important because young children learn primarily through concrete experiences, repetition, play, simple dialogue, and imitation of significant adults in their environment.

TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan is a relevant context for this study because it is located in Pasar Kotanopan, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra Province. Official data from the Ministry of Education records this institution as a private kindergarten/early childhood education unit with National School Identification Number (NPSN) 69812271, located at GG. Buntu, and operating under the Dharmawanita Kindergarten Foundation (Kemendikdasmen, 2026). Ministry data also shows that the institution has a total of 60 students and 5 educators and education staff (Kemendikdasmen, 2026). This indicates that the school has a manageable learning ecosystem that allows intensive character habituation due to its relatively small number of students and teachers, enabling close interaction. However, the success of character development still depends on instructional design, teacher consistency, family support, and school culture.

One of the activities with strong potential for internalizing Islamic character values is the morning routine. This activity is typically conducted before core learning begins and includes welcoming children at the gate, greeting, shaking hands politely, organizing shoes and bags, praying together, memorizing short surahs, reciting Asmaul Husna, reviewing daily prayers, engaging in Islamic songs, taking attendance, sharing brief stories, and establishing classroom agreements. Although these activities appear simple, they carry deep pedagogical meaning because they are conducted daily and involve cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Repetition of positive behavior in a supportive environment helps children understand that Islamic values are not merely advice but lived practices in everyday life.

Previous research by Cahyaningrum, Sudaryanti, and Purwanto (2017) shows that character development in early childhood can be achieved through habituation and role modeling. Religious values such as honesty, tolerance, and discipline should be integrated into concrete teaching strategies. Am et al. (2023) further emphasize that morning activities contribute to the development of religious character, including honesty, discipline, and independence through daily prayers, hadith recitation, and short surah memorization. Ananda (2017) also highlights that moral and religious values in early childhood are strongly influenced by teacher guidance and modeling behavior, as children tend to imitate adults. These findings strengthen the assumption that morning routines are an effective medium for character internalization and deserve further investigation in TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan.

Theoretically, internalization refers to the process through which values become embedded in an individual's consciousness, emotions, and habitual behavior, eventually forming part of their personality. Lickona (1991) explains that good character consists of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Children must know what is good, feel why it is important, and practice it consistently in real life. In the context of morning routines, it is not sufficient for children to simply be told that praying is good; they must experience a calm praying atmosphere, observe teachers modeling respectful behavior, and repeatedly practice it until it becomes habitual.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) emphasizes that children learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Teachers who greet children warmly, say greetings respectfully, apologize when wrong, and communicate gently are modeling character in action. Vygotsky (1978) further highlights that child development occurs through social interaction and scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where teachers support children in gradually mastering skills such as prayer recitation, turn-taking, and emotional regulation. Bronfenbrenner (1979) adds that child development is influenced by interconnected environmental systems, particularly family and school. Therefore, morning routines are more effective when values taught at school are reinforced at home.

Based on this background, the research questions of this study are: how is the morning routine implemented at TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan; what Islamic character values are internalized through the activity; how does the internalization process occur in early childhood; and what factors support and hinder the implementation of the activity. The objectives of this study are to describe the implementation of morning routines, analyze the emerging Islamic character values, explain the internalization process, and formulate pedagogical implications for early childhood educators and parents. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically to Islamic character education in early childhood and practically to the development of meaningful, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate morning routine practices in ECE settings.

## Literature Review

Early childhood education is widely recognized as a critical stage in human development, as it forms the foundation for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual growth. At this stage, children learn primarily through direct experience, imitation, repetition, and social interaction. According to Lickona (1991), character development involves three interconnected components, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These components indicate that character education is not limited to cognitive understanding, but must be internalized through feelings and consistently practiced in behavior. In early childhood education, this process is particularly important because children tend to learn through observation and habituation rather than abstract reasoning.

In the context of Islamic education, character formation is closely related to the development of faith (iman), worship practices (ibadah), and moral conduct (akhlaq). Al-Attas (1980) emphasizes that education in Islam is fundamentally a process of instilling adab, which refers to the proper recognition and placement of knowledge, self, and reality. This perspective highlights that Islamic education is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but the cultivation of disciplined, ethical, and spiritually aware individuals. Therefore, Islamic Early Childhood Education (PIAUD) must integrate moral and spiritual values into daily learning experiences to ensure holistic child development.

One of the effective strategies for early childhood character formation is habituation-based learning. Habituation allows children to repeatedly engage in positive behaviors until they become part of their daily routine. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) supports this view by explaining that children learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Teachers, as primary role models in early childhood settings, play a crucial role in demonstrating desired behaviors such as greeting politely, praying, sharing, and showing respect. Through consistent exposure to these behaviors, children gradually internalize moral and religious values.

Morning routine activities have been identified as one of the most effective forms of habituation in early childhood education. These activities typically include greeting teachers and peers, praying together, reciting short surahs, reviewing daily prayers, singing Islamic songs, and engaging in simple moral discussions. Am et al. (2023) found that morning activities significantly contribute to the development of religious character, including discipline, honesty, and independence. Similarly, Cahyaningrum et al. (2017) emphasize that character education in early childhood is most effective when implemented through consistent habituation and role modeling in daily school activities.

From a developmental perspective, Vygotsky (1978) highlights the importance of social interaction and scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In morning routine activities, teachers provide guidance, reminders, and emotional support to help children perform religious and social behaviors appropriately. This interaction enables children to gradually develop independence while still receiving necessary assistance from adults. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) suggests that child development is influenced by multiple environmental systems, particularly the microsystem of family and school. Therefore, the effectiveness of morning routines increases when there is consistency between values taught at school and those reinforced at home.

In the context of Indonesian education policy, character development is an integral part of early childhood education standards. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022) emphasizes that early childhood learning outcomes include religious and moral values, social-emotional development, cognitive skills, language abilities, and physical-motor development. This policy reinforces the importance of integrating character education into daily learning activities, including structured routines such as morning activities.

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that morning routine activities serve as an effective medium for internalizing Islamic character values in early childhood education. This effectiveness is supported by theoretical perspectives on character education, social learning, developmental psychology, and Islamic educational philosophy. Therefore, morning routines are not merely administrative or transitional classroom activities, but meaningful pedagogical practices that contribute to the formation of children's religious character, discipline, social behavior, and moral awareness.

## Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is not to measure statistical relationships between variables, but to understand the process of internalizing Islamic character values in the

natural context of morning routine activities. Qualitative research enables the researcher to capture the meaning of actions, interaction patterns, teacher language, children's responses, and the dynamics of the school environment, which cannot always be reduced into numerical data. Creswell and Poth (2018, pp. 45–47) state that qualitative research seeks to understand the meanings constructed by participants within specific social situations. Therefore, the focus of this study is directed toward the experiences, practices, and interpretations of teachers and children regarding morning routine activities.

The research site is TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan, located in Kotanopan District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The site was purposively selected because the school is an early childhood education institution with a strong socio-religious community context and is officially recorded as a private kindergarten under the Dharmawanita Foundation (Kemendikdasmen, 2026, n.p.). The research subjects include the school principal as a policy informant, classroom teachers as implementers of the routine activities, parents/guardians as informants regarding value reinforcement at home, and early childhood learners as participants of the activities. Since young children are considered vulnerable participants, data collection involving them must be conducted ethically, without pressure or coercion, and in a way that aligns with their natural world of play.

Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine the flow of morning routine activities, starting from children's arrival, welcoming activities, opening prayers, Qur'an recitation review (*muroja'ah*), cleanliness routines, attendance, apperception activities, and transitions to core learning activities. The focus of observation included teacher actions, children's participation, reinforcement strategies, socio-emotional expressions, and character indicators such as discipline, responsibility, independence, and care. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and parents to obtain information regarding the objectives of the activities, planning processes, challenges, and changes in children's behavior. Documentation included lesson plans (RPPH or learning modules), activity schedules, photographs, assessment records, classroom rules, and school profiles.

The main research instrument is the researcher, supported by observation guidelines, interview protocols, and documentation sheets. The observation guidelines were developed based on Islamic character indicators appropriate for early childhood, including greeting others politely, praying in an orderly manner, maintaining cleanliness, organizing personal belongings, waiting for turns, speaking honestly, helping peers, following classroom agreements, and expressing gratitude. The teacher interview protocol includes questions about the purpose of morning routines, habituation strategies, role modeling practices, disciplinary approaches, collaboration with parents, and methods for assessing character development. The parent interview protocol focuses on the continuity of children's behavior at home, such as praying habits, greeting others, helping behavior, and independence.

Data analysis follows the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model (2014, pp. 31–33), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involves selecting relevant information from observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents. Data display is presented in thematic narratives, character value matrices, and descriptions of activity flows. Conclusions are drawn gradually by comparing findings from multiple data sources. Data validity is ensured through technique triangulation, source triangulation, member checking, and peer or supervisor discussions. Moleong (2017, pp. 330–331) explains that triangulation can be used to test data credibility by comparing multiple sources and methods.

Ethically, research involving early childhood participants requires institutional permission, parental or guardian consent, and assurance that children's identities are not disclosed. Photographs or videos may only be used for academic purposes with written permission. The researcher must also avoid labeling children negatively. For example, a child

who is not yet able to follow prayer routines should not be described as “non-religious,” but rather as a child who is still in need of guidance, repetition, and developmental support. In this way, the research method not only fulfills academic standards but also respects the dignity of children as developing learners.

## Results

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of morning routine activities at TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan plays a significant role in the internalization of Islamic character values in early childhood. The internalization process occurs systematically, continuously, and naturally through daily habituation, teacher modeling, and structured social interaction in the school environment. The results are organized into several key dimensions: (1) implementation of morning routine activities, (2) internalized Islamic character values, (3) internalization process in children, and (4) supporting and inhibiting factors.

### 4.1 Implementation of Morning Routine Activities

The morning routine at TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan is conducted consistently before the core learning activities begin. The routine starts from the children’s arrival at school, where teachers welcome them warmly at the gate with greetings and smiles. This is followed by handshaking activities, where children are guided to greet teachers and peers politely. After entering the classroom, children organize their belongings, such as shoes, bags, and drinking bottles, which indirectly fosters independence and responsibility.

Subsequently, children engage in a series of structured religious and character-building activities, including group prayer, recitation of short surahs, daily prayer memorization, Asmaul Husna recitation, and Islamic songs. Attendance checking is conducted in a friendly manner, followed by simple storytelling or apperception activities to prepare children for the core lesson. The routine ends with classroom agreement building, where children are reminded of rules such as taking turns, speaking politely, and respecting friends.

These activities are conducted in a joyful atmosphere, emphasizing emotional comfort and positive reinforcement rather than coercion. Teachers consistently position themselves as role models who demonstrate Islamic manners, such as greeting others, speaking gently, and showing patience in guiding children.

### 4.2 Internalized Islamic Character Values

The study identifies several Islamic character values that are internalized through morning routine activities, including religious values, moral values, and social-emotional behaviors.

- a. Religious Values (Ibadah and Faith Awareness) Children develop familiarity with daily prayers, short surahs, and remembrance of Allah through repetition. Over time, children begin to spontaneously recite prayers before and after activities. This indicates the emergence of habituated religious consciousness rather than rote memorization.
- b. Moral Values (Akhlaq) : Values such as honesty, politeness, gratitude, and respect are gradually formed. Children are encouraged to use polite expressions such as greetings, thank you, and apologies. These behaviors are reinforced through teacher modeling and daily practice.
- c. Social Values (Adab and Interaction Skills): Morning routines foster behaviors such as taking turns, sharing, helping peers, and respecting others. Children learn to wait patiently and follow group instructions, which contributes to the development of social discipline.
- d. Independence and Responsibility: Children demonstrate increasing independence in managing personal belongings, organizing shoes and bags, and completing simple tasks without assistance. Responsibility is also observed when children follow classroom rules and complete assigned routines.

### 4.3 The Internalization Process of Islamic Values

The internalization of Islamic character values occurs through three interconnected mechanisms: habituation, modeling, and reinforcement.

First, habituation plays a dominant role. The repetition of daily morning routines allows children to internalize values gradually. Activities such as greeting, praying, and tidying up are repeated every day, making them part of children's behavioral patterns.

Second, modeling (*uswah hasanah*) provided by teachers is a critical factor. Teachers act as direct examples of Islamic behavior. Children imitate how teachers speak politely, show patience, and perform religious practices. This imitation process confirms Bandura's social learning theory, where observation becomes a key mechanism of learning.

Third, reinforcement and guidance (scaffolding) are provided during activities. Teachers support children who struggle to follow instructions, remind them gently when they forget, and provide encouragement to strengthen positive behavior. This aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learning occurs through guided assistance. The internalization process is not instantaneous but gradual, moving from awareness, to imitation, and finally to habitual behavior.

#### Supporting Factors

Several factors support the successful implementation of morning routine activities:

1. Religious school culture, where Islamic values are consistently practiced in daily school life.
2. Teacher consistency in modeling behavior, which strengthens children's imitation.
3. Simple and structured routine design, making it easy for children to understand and follow.
4. Small and manageable class size, allowing close teacher-child interaction.
5. Parental support, especially when similar values are reinforced at home.

These factors collectively strengthen the sustainability of character internalization.

#### Inhibiting Factors

Despite its effectiveness, several challenges were identified:

1. Differences in children's developmental readiness, where some children require more time to follow routines.
2. Limited concentration span of early childhood learners, which sometimes disrupts group activities.
3. Variations in home environment support, where not all families reinforce Islamic habits consistently.
4. Occasional lack of focus during repetitive activities, requiring continuous teacher creativity.

Overall, the study shows that morning routine activities function as an effective medium for internalizing Islamic character values in early childhood education. The process occurs naturally through structured daily habits, teacher modeling, and guided interaction. The integration of religious, moral, and social values within routine activities demonstrates that character education is most effective when embedded in children's daily experiences rather than delivered as separate instruction.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that *morning routine* activities at TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan serve as an effective strategy for the internalization of Islamic character values in early childhood education. These activities function not only as a pre-learning routine but also as a continuous habituation process that integrates religious, moral, social, and independence values in a meaningful and sustainable way.

The internalization of Islamic character values occurs through daily habituation, teacher role modeling, and consistent guidance aligned with children's developmental stages. Values such as discipline, responsibility, politeness, independence, care for others, and religiosity are gradually developed through simple daily activities such as greeting, praying, organizing personal belongings, and interacting with peers.

The success of the *morning routine* implementation is supported by a religious school culture, teachers' consistency in modeling Islamic behavior, and parental involvement in reinforcing habits at home. However, several challenges remain, including differences in children's developmental readiness, limited attention span, and variations in family support systems.

Therefore, *morning routine* activities can be considered an effective, contextual, and developmentally appropriate model for Islamic character education in early childhood settings. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically as a reference for early childhood educators in designing meaningful, joyful, and value-based daily routines that support holistic child development.

## References

- [1] Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*. Jakarta, Indonesia, 2003.
- [2] Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, n.d. [Online]. Available: <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/>
- [3] Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 5 Tahun 2022 tentang Standar Kompetensi Lulusan pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah*. Jakarta, Indonesia, 2022.
- [4] Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, "Profil TK Dharma Wanita Kotanopan," *Referensi Data Kemendikdasmen*, 2026. [Online]. Available: <https://referensi.data.kemendikdasmen.go.id/>
- [5] E. S. Cahyaningrum, Sudaryanti, and N. A. Purwanto, "Pengembangan nilai-nilai karakter anak usia dini melalui pembiasaan dan keteladanan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 203–213, 2017.
- [6] A. Am, A. Am, and Siska, "Morning activity dalam pembentukan karakter religius anak usia dini," *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, pp. 5495–5505, 2023.
- [7] R. Ananda, "Implementasi nilai-nilai moral dan agama pada anak usia dini," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 19–31, 2017.
- [8] T. Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. New York, NY, USA: Bantam Books, 1991.
- [9] A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA: Prentice-Hall, 1977.
- [10] L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- [11] U. Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- [12] J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2018.
- [13] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2014.
- [14] L. J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, rev. ed. Bandung, Indonesia: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017.

