



Implementing Islamic Moral Education to Build Student Discipline: Lickona's Moral Knowing, Feeling, and Action in an Indonesian Public Primary School

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Abstract

This study examines how Islamic moral education (*akhlak*) is implemented to build student discipline at SDN Karanganyar 01, an Indonesian public primary school, analysing strategies across Lickona's moral knowing, feeling, and action, their supporting and constraining factors, and their effects on students' conduct. A descriptive qualitative case study was conducted from January to May 2026 in Tegal Regency, Central Java. The principal, the Islamic Religious Education teacher, homeroom teachers, and upper-grade students were selected purposively. Data from in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and documents were analysed with Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model and checked through source and technique triangulation. Discipline was built through exemplary narratives, affective reinforcement grounded in moral shame (*al-ḥayā*), and daily habituation such as congregational Dhuhr prayer, punctual arrival, and courtesy routines, sustained by teacher modelling. Weak home supervision and unregulated gadget use constrained transfer beyond school. The findings inform Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, teacher education, character education policy, and school-family partnerships. The study shows that Lickona's components operate as a recursive cycle rather than a linear sequence, and specifies how Islamic concepts give them operational content in a public school.

Keywords: Islamic Moral Education; Student Discipline; Character Education; Thomas Lickona; Primary School; Habituation

1. Introduction

Indonesian law gives schools a task that goes well beyond the transmission of knowledge. Article 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System states that national education aims to develop learners who are faithful and pious, of noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and who become democratic and responsible citizens.¹ This mandate was reinforced by Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education, which lists religiosity and discipline among the values that schools are expected to cultivate through classroom learning, school culture, and community involvement.² In Muslim-majority settings, these national goals meet a long tradition in which moral formation is not an addition to education but its purpose. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have described his mission as being sent to perfect good character,³ and Islamic educational thought has consistently treated knowledge, worship, and conduct as inseparable parts of a single process of formation.⁴

Legal mandates and religious doctrine, however, do not guarantee practice. Research on Indonesian schools has repeatedly found a gap between the ideal of character education and what happens in classrooms. Abdullah and colleagues, studying three schools in Yogyakarta, observed that character education often stopped at introducing standardised concepts without involving students in the social practices through which values are actually adopted.⁵ At the same time, primary school children now encounter smartphones and social media at an earlier age than any previous generation. A systematic review of reviews associated high screen time with a range of adverse outcomes in children and adolescents, including poorer sleep and lower well-being, although the strength of evidence varied across outcomes.⁶ Indonesian teachers frequently connect these changes with weaker learning discipline, declining adherence to school rules, fading respect (*ta'zim*) toward teachers and parents, and dishonesty in academic tasks. Whatever the precise causal pathways, schools are under growing pressure to show that moral education produces observable conduct rather than memorised norms.

SDN Karanganyar 01, a state primary school in Kedungbanteng District, Tegal Regency, Central Java, faces these pressures in a particular form. As a public school rather than a madrasah or pesantren, it follows the national curriculum and serves families from heterogeneous social backgrounds. Formal Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*, PAI) receives only a few lesson hours each week. Nevertheless, the school has developed a set of religious and civic routines, including congregational Dhuhr prayer, a Friday morning sermon (*kultum*), a charity program (*infak*), and a courtesy routine known locally as 5S (*senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, santun*: smile, greet, address, be polite, be courteous), that aim to turn Islamic moral teaching into daily discipline. The case therefore allows us to examine how an ordinary public primary school operationalises *akhlak* education within the constraints of limited instructional time, diverse home environments, and a digital childhood.

¹ Republic of Indonesia, *Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System* (Jakarta: State Secretariat, 2003), art. 3.

² Republic of Indonesia, *Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education* (Jakarta: State Secretariat, 2017), art. 3.

³ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ḥadīth no. 8952; Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, ḥadīth no. 273; also narrated by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*.

⁴ J. Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (2004): 517–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006042000284510>; Muzayyin Arifin, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2015).

⁵ Irwan Abdullah et al., "Beyond School Reach: Character Education in Three Schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 9, no. 3 (2019): 145–59, <https://doi.org/10.2478/jesr-2019-0032>.

⁶ Neza Stiglic and Russell M. Viner, "Effects of Screen time on the Health and Well-Being of Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review of Reviews," *BMJ Open* 9, no. 1 (2019): e023191, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-023191>.

Lickona's model of character, which distinguishes moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action,⁷ has become one of the most widely used frameworks in Indonesian studies of character education. Much of this literature, however, is either conceptual, comparing Lickona with classical Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazālī,⁸ or quantitative, measuring the three components through questionnaires.⁹ Fewer studies trace how the three components are enacted, sequenced, and sustained in the routines of a particular school, and fewer still examine how Islamic concepts give those components operational meaning in a public school. Studies of religious habituation, for their part, often report that congregational prayer improves discipline, but they pay less attention to the difference between compliance under supervision and commitment that students have made their own.¹⁰

This article addresses that gap through three research questions. First, what operational strategies do the PAI teacher and the school use to implement moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in building student discipline at SDN Karanganyar 01? Second, what factors support and constrain the integration of Islamic moral education into daily habituation? Third, to what extent do these practices change students' discipline and courtesy in everyday interaction, and what kind of change is it? The article argues that discipline at this school is not produced by any single component or program. It emerges from a recursive cycle in which knowing, feeling, and acting reinforce one another, anchored by teacher modelling and weakened at the boundary between school and home. By making this cycle visible, the study contributes to Islamic education and character education scholarship in two ways: it shows how a framework developed in a Western, largely secular context is given local religious content, and it identifies where that process remains fragile.

2. Literature Review

Lickona's Integrated Model of Character

Lickona defines good character as knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good, which he describes as habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action.¹¹ Moral knowing comprises moral awareness, knowledge of moral values, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-knowledge. Moral feeling comprises conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility. Moral action involves competence, will, and habit.¹² The strength of the model lies in its insistence that these components are interdependent. Knowledge without feeling can produce rationalisation, while feeling without habit produces good intentions that are rarely carried out. Lickona's later principles of effective character education add that schools must define character comprehensively, create opportunities for students to act morally, and involve

⁷ Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991).

⁸ S. Huda et al., "The Concept of Character Learning: A Comparative Study of Al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona's Perspectives," *Dayah: Journal of Islamic Education* 5, no. 1 (2022): 35–52, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jie.v5i1.11974>.

⁹ U. A. Izzati et al., "Character Education: Gender Differences in Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, and Moral Action in Elementary Schools in Indonesia," *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists* 7, no. 3 (2019): 547–56, <https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.597765>.

¹⁰ Miftachul Nadila, Romelah Romelah, and Nur Afifah Khurin Maknin, "Implementation of Congregational Duha and Zuhur Prayers as an Effort to Discipline Students," *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikulturalisme* 6, no. 2 (2024): 342–53, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v6i2.6061>.

¹¹ Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 51.

¹² Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 53.

the whole school community and parents as partners.¹³ Reviews of what works in character education point in a similar direction, identifying modelling, school-wide consistency, and family involvement among the practices most often associated with positive outcomes.¹⁴

The model has not escaped criticism. Kristjánsson, while defending virtue education against a number of common misconceptions, identifies unresolved problems in the field, including how early habituation is supposed to develop into reflective, self-endorsed virtue.¹⁵ Self-determination theory makes a related point in psychological terms: behaviour regulated by external pressure tends to be less stable than behaviour whose value a person has come to accept as their own.¹⁶ These critiques are important for the present study because religious habituation in schools can produce either outcome, and the difference is not visible in attendance records alone. A school may achieve full participation in congregational prayer while students regard it as one more rule to be obeyed under supervision.

Islamic Moral Education: *Akhlāq*, *Adab*, and Habituation

In Islamic thought, morality is not separated from religion. Halstead distinguishes three kinds of values in Islam: *akhlāq*, understood as the duties and responsibilities set out in the shari‘a and in Islamic teaching generally; *adab*, the manners associated with good upbringing; and the qualities of character that follow the example of the Prophet. He also describes moral education in Islam as having two tasks, transmitting knowledge of what one should and should not do and motivating people to act on that knowledge, with inner change as the ultimate aim.¹⁷ Indonesian scholarship on *akhlak* similarly treats noble character as the fruit of an integrated process in which belief, knowledge, and practice are cultivated together.¹⁸

Classical Muslim scholars placed considerable weight on practice. Al-Ghazālī argued that good character can be acquired by repeatedly performing the actions that belong to it until they become second nature, and he compared the disciplining of the soul to the treatment of the body.¹⁹ Al-Zarnūjī’s *Ta’līm al-Muta’allim*, still widely read in Indonesian Islamic schools, presents respect for teachers and regularity in study as conditions for acquiring beneficial knowledge.²⁰ Concepts such as *istiqāmah* (steadfast consistency), *al-ḥayā’* (modesty or moral shame), and *uswah ḥasanah* (good example) thus provide an indigenous vocabulary for what Lickona calls habit, conscience, and modelling. Comparative studies have argued that al-Ghazālī and Lickona converge on the integration of cognition, affect, and practice, while differing on the ultimate grounding of moral motivation, which for al-Ghazālī is religious and transcendent.²¹

¹³ Thomas Lickona, “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education,” *Journal of Moral Education* 25, no. 1 (1996): 93–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724960250110>.

¹⁴ Marvin W. Berkowitz and Melinda C. Bier, “What Works in Character Education,” *Journal of Research in Character Education* 5, no. 1 (2007): 29–48.

¹⁵ Kristján Kristjánsson, “Ten Myths About Character, Virtue and Virtue Education—Plus Three Well-Founded Misgivings,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 61, no. 3 (2013): 269–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.778386>.

¹⁶ Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, “Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68–78, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>.

¹⁷ J. Mark Halstead, “Islamic Values: A Distinctive Framework for Moral Education?,” *Journal of Moral Education* 36, no. 3 (2007): 283–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240701643056>.

¹⁸ Abuddin Nata, *Akhlak Tasawuf dan Karakter Mulia* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2017).

¹⁹ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *On Disciplining the Soul and On Breaking the Two Desires: Books XXII and XXIII of the Revival of the Religious Sciences*, trans. T. J. Winter (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995).

²⁰ Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī, *Ta’līm al-Muta’allim—Ṭarīq at-Ta’allum: Instruction of the Student, the Method of Learning*, trans. G. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1947).

²¹ Huda et al., “Concept of Character Learning”.

Habituation, Modelling, and the Ecology of Discipline

Research on the psychology of habit helps explain why school routines matter. Habits form when behaviour is repeated in a stable context until features of that context cue the behaviour with little deliberation.²² Fixed prayer times, a set arrival time, and repeated greeting rituals are precisely the kind of stable contextual cues that can make disciplined behaviour less effortful over time. Habit alone, however, does not settle whether behaviour is valued or merely automatic, and habits cued by one context may not transfer to another.

Modelling adds a social dimension. Bandura's social learning theory holds that much behaviour is acquired by observing others, particularly models who are admired or have status.²³ Sanderse's review of role modelling in moral education, however, found that modelling is rarely used as an explicit teaching method, and he recommends that teachers explain why the traits they model are morally significant and how students can acquire those traits themselves.²⁴ Kristjánsson likewise distinguishes emulation, which is driven by admiration and a wish to become like the model, from mere copying of behaviour.²⁵ In Islamic education, the example of the Prophet and the conduct of the teacher carry this role, which is why teacher behaviour is commonly regarded as part of the curriculum itself.

Children also move between settings. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory locates development in the microsystems a child inhabits, including school and family, and in the links between them, which he calls the mesosystem.²⁶ Epstein's work on school, family, and community partnerships shows that shared expectations across these settings support student outcomes more effectively than school effort alone.²⁷ Studies of Muslim families in Indonesia likewise identify the home as a primary site of character building, especially for religious practice and manners.²⁸ From this perspective, discipline is not only a property of the student but also of the relationship between the settings in which the student lives.

Religious Habituation in Indonesian Schools and the Research Gap

Empirical research in Indonesia offers a mixed but instructive picture. Izzati and colleagues surveyed 482 sixth-grade students in Bangkalan and found differences between male and female students across moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, suggesting that the three components can develop unevenly.²⁹ Nadila, Romelah, and Maknin found that congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers at a vocational school supported student discipline, yet some students still required direction from teachers on duty, and limited time and ablution facilities caused some to arrive late or miss the

²² Wendy Wood and Dennis Rünger, "Psychology of Habit," *Annual Review of Psychology* 67 (2016): 289–314, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033417>.

²³ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

²⁴ Wouter Sanderse, "The Meaning of Role Modelling in Moral and Character Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 42, no. 1 (2013): 28–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2012.690727>.

²⁵ Kristján Kristjánsson, "Emulation and the Use of Role Models in Moral Education," *Journal of Moral Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 37–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240500495278>.

²⁶ Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

²⁷ Joyce L. Epstein, "School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share," *Phi Delta Kappan* 92, no. 3 (2010): 81–96, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009200326>.

²⁸ Soki et al., "Character Building in Islamic Society: A Case Study of Muslim Families in Tulungagung, East Java, Indonesia," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 10, no. 2 (2019): 224–42.

²⁹ Izzati et al., "Character Education".

prayer altogether.³⁰ International research on religious education teachers suggests that they often see their subject as a natural home for character education but draw on differing understandings of what character education involves.³¹ Reviews of teaching strategies for moral education emphasise dialogue and reflection alongside direct instruction,³² and a systematic review of teachers' beliefs about primary school character education shows that implementation depends heavily on how teachers understand and take ownership of the curriculum.³³

Table 1: Map of Previous Studies and the Position of This Study

Research Cluster	Main Focus	Limitation	Contribution of This Study
Lickona-based character education	Components of moral knowing, feeling, and action; conceptual comparison and survey measurement.	Components often treated as a linear sequence and measured separately from school routines.	Traces how the three components are enacted and sequenced in daily school practice.
Islamic moral education	<i>Akhlāq</i> , <i>adab</i> , habituation, and the teacher as exemplar in classical and contemporary thought.	Frequently normative; limited field evidence from public (non-madrasah) primary schools.	Shows how <i>istiqāmah</i> , <i>al-hayā'</i> , and <i>uswah ḥasanah</i> are operationalised in a public school.
Religious habituation and discipline	Congregational prayer, rules, and routines as tools for discipline.	Participation often equated with internalisation; home context treated only as an obstacle.	Distinguishes compliance from internalisation and analyses the school-home boundary.

Taken together, this literature leaves three gaps. First, Lickona's framework is frequently applied as a linear sequence moving from knowing to feeling to action, without asking whether schools actually follow that order. Second, studies of religious habituation often equate participation with internalisation. Third, the school-home boundary is usually listed as an inhibiting factor rather than analysed as part of how discipline is produced or lost. The present study addresses these gaps in the setting of a public primary school, where religious routines must be built within a national curriculum and alongside limited PAI instructional time.

3. Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative design in the form of a single-site case study. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research questions concern processes, meanings, and practices, namely how teachers translate Islamic moral values into routines and how students

³⁰ Nadila, Romelah, and Maknin, "Congregational Duha and Zuhur Prayers".

³¹ Jason Metcalfe and Daniel Moulin-Stožek, "Religious Education Teachers' Perspectives on Character Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* 43, no. 3 (2021): 349–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1713049>.

³² Jaap Schuitema, Geert ten Dam, and Wiel Veugelers, "Teaching Strategies for Moral Education: A Review," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40, no. 1 (2008): 69–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270701294210>.

³³ Z. H. Muzakir and R. A. Razak, "Teachers' Beliefs towards Character Education Curriculum in Primary School: A Systematic Literature Review," *Education 3–13* (2022), advance online publication, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2022.2142478>.

experience those routines, rather than the measurement of variables.³⁴ The researchers acted as the key research instrument, observing phenomena in their natural setting without manipulating any conditions.

The research was conducted at SDN Karanganyar 01, Jl. Simpang Tiga, Karanganyar Village, Kedungbanteng District, Tegal Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, from January to May 2026. Established in 1910, the school is a state primary school under the national Ministry of Education. During the study period it enrolled 213 students (113 boys and 100 girls) and was staffed by seven teachers. The school was selected because it runs a structured program of religious habituation within a public, non-madrasah setting, which makes it an informative case for understanding how Islamic moral education is operationalised under ordinary institutional constraints. Informants were selected through purposive sampling according to their roles in the program: the principal, as the maker of school policy; the PAI teacher, as the main implementer of religious guidance; homeroom teachers, as the daily monitors of student behaviour; and representative students from the upper grades (grades IV to VI), who were considered able to describe their own experience of school routines. Students were chosen with the help of homeroom teachers to include both boys and girls and students with different records of punctuality. Interviews continued until additional informants no longer produced new themes. Informant codes are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Informants, Data Sources, and Codes

No.	Source/Data Type	Focus	Code
1	Interview with the principal	School policy, rules, program design, supporting resources	I-PR
2	Interviews with the PAI teacher	Strategies for moral knowing, feeling, and action; obstacles	I-TP
3	Interviews with homeroom teachers of grades IV–VI	Daily conduct, punctuality, cooperation with the PAI teacher	I-TH
4	Interviews with students of grades IV–VI	Experience of routines, feelings about rules, home habits	I-S
5	Passive participant observation of arrival, greeting, PAI lessons, Dhuhr prayer, Friday <i>kultum</i> and <i>infak</i> , cleanliness, and queuing (January–May 2026)	Enactment of routines and student behaviour	O-RT
6	Documents: PAI modules, school rules, student discipline records, activity photographs	Formal design and records of behaviour	D-DOC

Primary data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and passive participant observation. Interviews explored how each informant understood discipline, how Islamic values were taught and reinforced, what changes they had observed in students, and what obstacles they faced. Observation focused on routines in which discipline becomes visible: morning arrival, greeting practices, PAI lessons, preparation for and performance of Dhuhr prayer, the Friday *kultum*

³⁴ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018).

and *infak*, classroom cleaning, and queuing. The researchers were present during these routines but did not direct them. Secondary data were gathered through documentation, including PAI teaching modules, school rules, student discipline records, and photographs of habituation activities.

Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, carried out concurrently throughout the fieldwork.³⁵ In the condensation stage, interview transcripts and field notes were selected, simplified, and coded. Coding combined a deductive start list derived from Lickona's three components and their sub-components with inductive codes that emerged from the field, such as moral shame, the role of teacher example, and the discontinuity between school and home. In the display stage, coded data were organised into matrices linking each component with activities, Islamic concepts, behavioural indicators, and data sources, as shown in Tables 3 to 5. Conclusions were drawn tentatively and verified continuously against new data. Coding was carried out manually by the two authors, who compared their codes and resolved differences through discussion.

Trustworthiness was established primarily through triangulation, a strategy for strengthening credibility in qualitative research.³⁶ Source triangulation compared accounts from the principal, the PAI teacher, homeroom teachers, and students, while technique triangulation compared interview data with field observations and official documents.³⁷ A claim was retained as a finding only when it was supported by at least two sources or two techniques; where accounts diverged, the divergence itself was treated as data. Permission for the study was obtained from the school principal. Student interviews were conducted at school with the knowledge of homeroom teachers, participation was voluntary, and all informants are identified only by codes to protect their privacy.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings show that discipline at SDN Karanganyar 01 is cultivated through the coordinated use of the three components of Lickona's model. The school's strategy is designed to ensure that Islamic values do not stop at the memorisation of doctrine but also reach students' emotions and appear in concrete behaviour. Table 3 summarises how each component is operationalised.

Table 3: Operationalisation of Islamic Moral Education at SDN Karanganyar 01

Component	Islamic Concept	Activities and Curricular Integration	Indicators of Student Behaviour
Moral knowing	<i>Istiqāmah</i> ; distinction between <i>akhlāq maḥmūdah</i> and <i>madhmūmah</i>	Stories of the Prophet (<i>sīrah nabawiyyah</i>); Qur'anic verses and hadith on discipline; introduction of Islamic classroom rules in PAI lessons; prayer times used to explain orderly living.	Students understand the meaning of obedience, know the consequences of breaking rules, and distinguish praiseworthy from blameworthy conduct.

³⁵ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2020).

³⁶ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1985).

³⁷ Nancy Carter et al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research," *Oncology Nursing Forum* 41, no. 5 (2014): 545–47, <https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547>.

Component	Islamic Concept	Activities and Curricular Integration	Indicators of Student Behaviour
Moral feeling	<i>Al-ḥayā'</i> ; love of God's teaching; respect for teachers (<i>ta'zīm</i>)	Reflection after lessons; morning prayer and reflection; Friday <i>kultum</i> ; empathy through the <i>infak</i> charity program.	Inner awareness to carry out duties without coercion; feeling of guilt when breaking rules; appreciation of teachers.
Moral action	<i>Uswah ḥasanah</i> ; habituation (<i>pembiasaan</i>)	Congregational Dhuhr prayer; arrival by 07.00; greeting and kissing teachers' hands; 5S courtesy routine; queuing; keeping the environment clean.	Students carry out religious and school duties independently, arrive on time, and show consistent social courtesy.

Moral Knowing: Making Discipline Intelligible

At the level of moral knowing, the PAI teacher presents discipline as a religious concept rather than a school regulation. Lessons connect discipline with *istiqāmah*, the steadfast consistency that Islam asks of believers, and use stories from the life of the Prophet together with Qur'anic verses and hadith to illustrate it (I-TP; D-DOC). The teacher's aim, as described in interviews, is not for students to memorise legal rulings but to understand why human beings need to live in an orderly way. The clearest example is the five daily prayers. Because each prayer has a fixed time, the teacher uses them to show that Islam itself trains people to organise their day, so that punctuality at school is presented as a continuation of a discipline students already recognise from worship (I-TP; O-RT). PAI modules also introduce classroom rules framed in Islamic terms and teach students to distinguish praiseworthy (*maḥmūdah*) from blameworthy (*madhmūmah*) conduct (D-DOC).

Two features of this approach deserve attention. First, moral knowing is anchored in a temporal structure that children already inhabit. Rather than presenting discipline as an abstract virtue, the teacher links it to the rhythm of the prayer day, which gives the concept an immediate, concrete reference. This corresponds to Lickona's emphasis on knowing moral values and moral reasoning,³⁸ but it relies more on narrative exemplars than on perspective-taking or open moral dilemmas. Second, knowing the consequences of breaking rules, one of the reported indicators, carries a risk. If consequences are presented mainly as punishments, moral reasoning can remain oriented toward avoiding sanctions. The teacher's habit of explaining reasons, and the use of prophetic stories that present discipline as admirable rather than merely required, partly offsets this risk, in line with Sanderse's recommendation that modelled values be explained rather than simply displayed.³⁹

Moral Feeling: Shame, Reflection, and Care

At the level of moral feeling, teachers seek to cultivate love for God's teaching and a sense of moral shame (*al-ḥayā'*) when obligations are neglected. This is done through collective prayer and morning reflection, short reflections after lessons, and the Friday *kultum*, which informants described as a means of stirring students' internal motivation (I-TP; I-PR; O-RT). The *infak* program, in which

³⁸ Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 53.

³⁹ Sanderse, "Role Modelling".

students contribute voluntarily to charity, extends this emotional work from self-control toward concern for others (O-RT; D-DOC). Teachers and students reported that this persuasive approach gradually changed how students perceived the rules: school regulations came to be seen less as a burden imposed from outside and more as a cultural and spiritual need (I-TP; I-S). Students described feeling guilty when they broke rules and expressed appreciation for their teachers (I-S; I-TH).

Within Lickona's framework, *al-ḥayā'* functions much like conscience, the sense of obligation to act on what one knows is right and discomfort when one does not.⁴⁰ The concept is, however, double-edged. In the Islamic tradition, *al-ḥayā'* is a self-regarding moral emotion rooted in awareness of God, not public humiliation. The data suggest that the school uses it in the reflective sense, through prayer and personal reflection rather than punitive exposure, but this balance depends heavily on how individual teachers frame it. The reported shift from seeing rules as a burden to seeing them as a need is also significant. In the language of self-determination theory, it signals movement from external regulation toward identified regulation, in which a person values the purpose of a behaviour even if it is not intrinsically enjoyable.⁴¹ The *infak* program adds another element: it links discipline to care for others, so that discipline is understood not only as personal order but as a form of social responsibility.

Moral Action: Habituation and Modelling

Moral action is developed through direct habituation. The school has established congregational Dhuhr prayer in the school prayer room, a fixed arrival time of 07.00, the practice of greeting teachers and kissing their hands, the 5S courtesy routine, queuing in daily activities, and shared responsibility for cleanliness (O-RT; D-DOC; I-PR). Observation confirmed that these routines follow a regular timetable and take place in the same physical settings each day (O-RT). All informants identified the example set by the principal and teachers (*uswah ḥasanah*) as the key to making these routines work. Teachers arrive on time, join the congregational prayer, and practise the same greeting and courtesy norms they ask of students (I-PR; I-TH; O-RT).

The combination of stable routines and consistent adult example explains why moral action at this school is more than a list of rules. Habit research shows that behaviour repeated in a stable context comes to be cued by that context, reducing reliance on deliberate self-control.⁴² The 07.00 gate, the call to Dhuhr prayer, and the teacher standing at the classroom door are such cues. Modelling strengthens the process because students see that the norms apply to adults as well, which makes the routines appear fair and worth emulating.⁴³ At the same time, the reliance on teacher example is also a vulnerability: if modelling weakens, for example when teachers are absent or inconsistent, the cues that sustain student behaviour weaken with it.

Supporting and Constraining Factors

Table 4 summarises the factors that informants and documents identified as supporting or constraining the integration of Islamic moral education into daily habituation.

⁴⁰ Lickona, *Educating for Character*.

⁴¹ Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory".

⁴² Wood and Rünger, "Psychology of Habit".

⁴³ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*; Kristjánsson, "Emulation".

Table 4: Supporting and Constraining Factors

Category	Factor	Level	Source
Supporting	Strong commitment of the principal to religion-based school policy	School leadership	I-PR; I-TP; D-DOC
Supporting	Adequate worship facilities (prayer room, ablution area)	School resources	O-RT; I-PR
Supporting	Close cooperation between the PAI teacher and homeroom teachers	School staff	I-TP; I-TH
Supporting	Religious extracurricular program for Qur'anic reading and writing (BTA)	School program	I-TP; D-DOC
Constraining	Discontinuity of behavioural guidance when students are outside school	School-home boundary	I-TP; I-TH; I-S
Constraining	Limited parental supervision at home and unrestricted use of smart devices	Home	I-TH; I-TP; I-S
Constraining	Limited formal PAI lesson hours, requiring teachers to use non-lesson time creatively	Curriculum	I-TP; D-DOC

The pattern in Table 4 is analytically revealing. All the supporting factors are located inside the school: leadership, facilities, collegial cooperation, and extracurricular programs. The main constraints, by contrast, lie at the boundary between school and home or in the home itself. Teachers reported that the discipline built during the school day was often eroded when children returned home, particularly where parental supervision was limited and children had unrestricted access to smartphones (I-TH; I-TP). The third constraint, limited PAI lesson hours, has had an unexpected effect. Because the teacher cannot rely on formal lessons alone, much of the work of character education has moved out of the timetable and into the school's daily culture: prayer, greetings, queuing, and Friday activities. In this sense, the constraint has pushed the school toward the whole-school approach that Lickona recommends.⁴⁴

Changes in Discipline and Courtesy

Informants and documents describe a positive change in students' discipline and courtesy. According to the school's discipline records and daily observation, the number of late arrivals has declined gradually (D-DOC; O-RT; I-TH). Over the January–May 2026 fieldwork period, homeroom teachers' records and repeated morning observation pointed in the same direction, although the records were kept for monitoring rather than research purposes and are therefore read here as a trend rather than as precise measurement. Students show a growing independence in worship: they wash for prayer and arrange themselves in rows (*şaff*) without needing firm prompting from teachers (O-RT; I-TP). Informants also described a climate of mutual respect between students and teachers,

⁴⁴ Lickona, "Eleven Principles".

expressed in greetings, polite language, and attentiveness during lessons (I-PR; I-TH; I-S). Table 5 sets out these indicators together with their evidence and the limits of what they show.

Table 5: Indicators of Change, Evidence, and Interpretive Limits

Indicator	Evidence	What It Suggests	Interpretive Limit
Gradual decline in late arrivals	D-DOC; O-RT; I-TH	Punctuality is becoming habitual in the school context	Records show behaviour, not motivation; external factors may also play a role
Independent ablution and row formation for Dhuhr prayer	O-RT; I-TP	Routine is performed without close supervision, a sign of internalisation	Observed only within the school setting
Guilt when breaking rules; appreciation of teachers	I-S; I-TH	Development of conscience and respect	Based on self-report and teacher perception
Climate of mutual respect	I-PR; I-TH; O-RT	Courtesy norms shape everyday interaction	Depends on the continuity of adult modelling

The strongest evidence of internalisation is the independence students show in performing routines without prompting. Behaviour that continues when direct supervision is relaxed is a more reliable indicator than attendance alone, and it contrasts with findings from other Indonesian schools where some students still needed constant control from teachers on duty.⁴⁵ However, this evidence was gathered within the school, where the contextual cues for the behaviour are strongest. It therefore supports a claim of growing, context-bound internalisation rather than a claim that discipline has become a stable trait that students carry everywhere. For this reason, the article describes the change as noticeable and consistent across sources rather than statistically significant, a term that a qualitative design cannot support.

Discussion: From Sequence to Cycle

The first analytical implication concerns the order of Lickona's components. Lickona is often read, particularly in applied Indonesian studies, as proposing a sequence in which knowledge leads to feeling and feeling leads to action. The practice at SDN Karanganyar 01 does not follow that order. Many students begin congregational Dhuhr prayer, the 5S greetings, and the 07.00 arrival rule before they can explain the religious reasons behind them. The feelings of belonging, shame, or satisfaction then arise from participating in these routines, and PAI lessons later give students the concepts to name and justify what they already do. In practice, action often comes first, feeling follows, and knowledge consolidates both, after which the cycle begins again at a deeper level.

⁴⁵ Nadila, Romelah, and Maknin, "Congregational Duha and Zuhur Prayers".

This recursive pattern is consistent with al-Ghazālī's view that character is acquired by repeatedly performing its actions until they become second nature,⁴⁶ and with habit research showing that repeated behaviour in stable contexts becomes increasingly automatic.⁴⁷ It is also consistent with Lickona's own insistence that the three components interact rather than operate in isolation.⁴⁸ The contribution of this case is to show the direction of that interaction in a real school: habituated action is not merely the final outcome of moral education but often its starting point. The practical implication is that schools need not wait for full understanding before introducing routines, provided that those routines are later explained and connected to feeling, so that they do not remain empty repetition.

Discussion: Compliance or Internalisation?

The second implication concerns the quality of the discipline produced. Kristjánsson warns that the path from habituation to reflective, self-endorsed virtue remains poorly understood,⁴⁹ and self-determination theory suggests that externally regulated behaviour is fragile.⁵⁰ The findings of this study sit between these concerns and the school's own optimism. On the one hand, independent performance of worship routines, reported feelings of guilt, and the shift from seeing rules as a burden to seeing them as a need all indicate movement beyond compliance. On the other hand, teachers' reports that discipline erodes at home show that at least part of the behaviour remains tied to the school context. The most accurate reading is that internalisation is real but partial, and that it is strongest where the school provides both cues and explanations.

This reading helps to reconcile apparently contradictory findings in the literature. Studies that report strong effects of religious habituation on discipline and studies that report continuing need for supervision may both be correct, because they capture different stages of the same process or different degrees of support from explanation and modelling.⁵¹ For practitioners, the implication is that habituation programs should be evaluated not only by participation rates but by what students do when supervision is relaxed, and by whether they can explain, in their own words, why the practice matters.

Discussion: The School-Home Boundary

The third implication concerns the setting in which discipline is expected to hold. From an ecological perspective, the weakness identified in this study lies in the mesosystem, the link between school and home, rather than in either setting alone.⁵² The school has built a dense set of cues and models, but these cues are largely absent at home, where screen use is often unregulated. Habit theory predicts exactly this pattern: behaviour cued by one context does not automatically transfer to a context without the same cues.⁵³ Research on Indonesian Muslim families and on school-family

⁴⁶ al-Ghazālī, *On Disciplining the Soul*.

⁴⁷ Wood and Rünger, "Psychology of Habit".

⁴⁸ Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 51.

⁴⁹ Kristjánsson, "Ten Myths".

⁵⁰ Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory".

⁵¹ Nadila, Romelah, and Maknin, "Congregational Duha and Zuhur Prayers"; Schuitema, ten Dam, and Veugelers, "Teaching Strategies".

⁵² Bronfenbrenner, *Ecology of Human Development*.

⁵³ Wood and Rünger, "Psychology of Habit".

partnerships suggests that the remedy is not to extend school control into the home but to create shared expectations across both settings.⁵⁴

The school's own proposal, a daily habituation control book shared between teachers and parents, can serve this purpose if it is designed as a partnership tool rather than a surveillance instrument. A book that records prayer, study time, and agreed limits on device use, and that parents and teachers discuss together, would supply at home some of the cues that currently exist only at school. It would also give parents a concrete role in the moral cycle described above, in line with Lickona's principle that parents should be treated as partners in character education.⁵⁵

Discussion: Localising a Global Framework in a Public School

Finally, the case shows how a framework developed largely in Western, secular discussions of character education is given local content. At SDN Karanganyar 01, *istiqāmah* gives concrete meaning to habit, *al-ḥayā'* to conscience, and *uswah ḥasanah* to modelling. These Islamic concepts do more than translate Lickona's terms. They supply a transcendent motivation for discipline that the original framework leaves open, in keeping with Halstead's observation that moral education in Islam ultimately aims at inner, spiritual change.⁵⁶ This localisation also aligns with the national Strengthening Character Education policy, which expects religiosity and discipline to be developed through school culture as well as lessons.⁵⁷ Because SDN Karanganyar 01 is a public school serving diverse families, however, the approach also raises a question this study could not fully answer: how religious routines can remain inclusive of students whose families practise differently or hold other faiths. Table 6 summarises the analytical findings.

Table 6: Summary of Analytical Findings

Dimension	Key Finding	Theoretical Implication
Sequence of components	Action frequently precedes feeling and knowing; lessons later name and justify routines.	Lickona's components operate as a recursive cycle, consistent with al-Ghazālī's view of habituation.
Quality of discipline	Independent performance and reported guilt coexist with erosion at home.	Internalisation is real but partial and context-bound; explanation and modelling mediate it.
Setting	Supports are located in school; constraints at home and at the school-home boundary.	Discipline is a property of the mesosystem, not only of the student.
Localisation	<i>Istiqāmah</i> , <i>al-ḥayā'</i> , and <i>uswah ḥasanah</i> give operational meaning to habit, conscience, and modelling.	Islamic concepts supply transcendent motivation within a global character education framework.

⁵⁴ Epstein, "School/Family/Community Partnerships"; Sokip et al., "Character Building in Islamic Society".

⁵⁵ Lickona, "Eleven Principles".

⁵⁶ Halstead, "Islamic Values".

⁵⁷ Republic of Indonesia, *Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017*.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how Islamic moral education is implemented to build student discipline at SDN Karanganyar 01. In answer to the first research question, the school implements Lickona's three components through concrete, mutually reinforcing strategies: moral knowing through prophetic stories, Qur'anic and hadith texts, and the use of prayer times to explain orderly living; moral feeling through reflection, the Friday *kultum*, the *infak* program, and the cultivation of *al-hayā'*; and moral action through congregational Dhuhr prayer, a fixed arrival time, greeting and courtesy routines, queuing, and shared responsibility for cleanliness, all sustained by the example of the principal and teachers. In answer to the second question, these practices are supported by committed leadership, adequate facilities, collegial cooperation, and religious extracurricular programs, and constrained by weak continuity between school and home, unregulated device use, and limited PAI lesson hours. In answer to the third question, the evidence points to a noticeable, consistent improvement in punctuality, independence in worship, and courtesy, which indicates growing but context-bound internalisation.

The study makes two contributions. Conceptually, it shows that Lickona's components function in practice as a recursive cycle in which habituated action often comes first, and that this cycle is mediated by teacher modelling and explanation. Contextually, it shows how Islamic concepts give operational meaning to a global character education framework within a public primary school. These findings agree with research that emphasises habituation, modelling, and whole-school approaches, while qualifying studies that equate participation in religious routines with internalised character.

The study has several limitations. It is based on a single school and a limited period of fieldwork, it relies partly on self-reports and teacher perceptions, and it did not follow students over time or observe them at home. It also did not examine the experience of students whose families practise differently or hold other faiths. Future research could compare public schools and madrasahs, follow students longitudinally, include parents as informants, and test the recursive pattern identified here with mixed-methods designs. For practitioners, three recommendations follow: introduce routines early but explain them consistently; evaluate habituation by what students do when supervision is relaxed; and develop school-home instruments, such as a shared habituation book with agreed device limits, that extend the cues of discipline beyond the school gate.

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