

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXEMPLARY AND HABITUAL METHODS IN SHAPING STUDENTS' MORALS AT SMA NEGERI 1 BENGKUNAT

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas metode keteladanan dan pembiasaan dalam pembelajaran akhlak di SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt, Kecamatan Ngaras, Kabupaten Pesisir Barat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif, yang berfokus pada pemahaman fenomena secara holistik melalui deskripsi kata-kata dalam konteks alami. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, dengan teknik pengambilan sampel purposive sampling yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, dan staf sekolah sebagai informan utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode keteladanan efektif dalam membentuk karakter siswa, di mana siswa belajar nilai-nilai moral melalui observasi terhadap guru sebagai teladan. Keberhasilan metode ini didorong oleh kompetensi guru dan lingkungan sekolah yang mendukung. Metode pembiasaan juga efektif melalui kebiasaan positif yang diterapkan secara rutin, dengan guru sebagai fasilitator yang menggunakan penguatan positif dan negatif untuk menanamkan nilai moral. Untuk meningkatkan efektivitas kedua metode tersebut, disarankan agar guru memberikan contoh yang lebih variatif, memanfaatkan media pembelajaran interaktif, dan mengoptimalkan penghargaan.

Kata kunci: Metode Keteladanan, Metode Pembiasaan, Pendidikan Akhlak, Sekolah Menengah Atas

Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of exemplary and habituation methods in learning morals at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt, Ngaras District, Pesisir Barat Regency. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, focusing on understanding phenomena holistically through descriptions of words in a natural context. Data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation techniques, with purposive sampling techniques involving principals, teachers, and school staff as the primary informants. The results showed that the exemplary method effectively shapes student character, where students learn moral values by observing teachers as role models. The success of this method is driven by teacher competence and a supportive school environment. The habituation method is also effective through positive habits that are applied regularly, with teachers as facilitators who use positive and negative reinforcement to instill moral values. To improve the effectiveness of both methods, it is recommended

that teachers provide more varied examples, utilize interactive learning media, and optimize rewards.

Keywords: Exemplary Method, Habituation Methods, Moral Education, Senior High School

A. INTRODUCTION

Moral education is a fundamental aspect of community life. A student with high intellectual ability but without noble morals will not reflect an ideal personality in the future. According to Lickona (1999), Moral education is a shared responsibility. Schools, families, and communities must work together to instill moral values to form a moral, responsible, and socially responsible generation. According to K.H. Dewantara (2013), moral education is the core of education oriented towards the development of human character. In Islam, the issue of morality is of high urgency because it is the main foundation of the lives of its people.

Exemplary behavior has been proven to be the most effective method in improving the quality of morals and shaping students' moral, spiritual, and social aspects (Hendriana & Jacobus, 2017). In this case, teachers as role models play an important role through daily attitudes and behaviors (Wardhani & Wahono, 2017). The example shown by teachers not only directly impacts student behavior but also becomes the foundation for the habit of good behavior (Alimin & Muzammil, 2020).

However, the current educational reality shows that there are behavioral deviations among students. According to data released by the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA), in the period from January to February 2024, there have been 1,993 cases of violence against children. This figure shows the potential for an increase in the number of cases that could occur, especially when compared to data from 2023. Based on information issued by the National Commission for Child Protection (Komnas PA), in 2023, there were 3,547 complaints of cases of violence against children. Meanwhile, data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) noted that from January to August 2023, there were 2,355 cases of violations of child protection. Of the total cases, 861 occurred within the scope of education units (Fahham, 2024).

Research by Rahmelia & Wijayanti (2025) suggests that moral deterioration is caused by the lack of internalization of religious values and the lack of optimal implementation of religious education in the family, school, and community environment. One of the approaches that can be used to instill noble morals is coaching through habituation and creating an environment conducive to developing students' character. Implementing this strategy can be carried out through various activities in madrassas or schools, both in classroom learning activities and through creating a religious atmosphere in the school environment.

The exemplary-based approach has several advantages, including: (1) making it easier for students to apply the knowledge gained, (2) assisting teachers in evaluating learning outcomes, (3) directing educational goals to be more structured and effective, (4) creating a

conducive school, family, and community environment, (5) strengthening the harmonious relationship between teachers and students, (6) allowing teachers to apply knowledge directly in real life, and (7) encourage teachers always to maintain behavior because they are role models (Arief, 2002).

For example, at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, various religious programs have been implemented, such as tadarus Al-Qur'an, dhuha prayer, joint prayer, muhadharah, congregational zuhur prayer, and the celebration of Islamic holidays. The school manages all of these activities to realize its vision and mission, namely "Forming Quality Human Beings," which is to develop moral education.

Inversely proportional to existing expectations. Based on initial observations at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, some students still violated school rules. Although these violations are not classified as severe, this phenomenon still requires serious attention, especially from Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, who are responsible not only for delivering material but also for shaping students' personalities. Some of the negative behaviors observed include: the use of abusive language towards friends, indiscipline in class, lack of manners towards older people, and the habit of reproaching teachers during learning (Observation, September 20, 2024). This behavior not only reflects the weakness of individual morals but also has the potential to be contagious to other students.

To overcome this, the head of the school designed and implemented some activities in a structured manner. Based on the results of the interview, moral development efforts are carried out through habituation strategies such as saying greetings when meeting teachers, applying school rules, and setting an example. This activity was guided by the Vice Principal for Student Affairs and involved all teachers and administrative staff, creating cooperation in shaping students' character.

Although various efforts have been made, challenges in moral development remain. Based on an initial survey of 32 students, it was found that the internalization of moral values in daily life still faces obstacles. Therefore, continuous evaluation between schools, families, and communities is needed to strengthen the formation of students' character under moral values and religious teachings.

Based on interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, it was found that the number of students who committed violations was as follows: 17 students arrived late, 14 students did not wear their uniforms neatly, four students skipped school, and six students did not do their assignments. Therefore, this study seeks to dig deeper into the effectiveness of the moral development program in the school and the obstacles faced in its implementation.

Table 1. Violations committed by students

Reasons for Violation	Sum
1. Arriving late at the school	17
2. Not putting on clothes	14
3. Skipping a Skip	4
4. Not doing the assignment given by the teacher	6
5. Not performing dhuha prayers	3

6. Not performing the zuhur prayer

8

Source: Interview Results and School Documentation

Although various studies have highlighted the importance of moral education through example and habituation (Husna, 2022; Sari et al., 2021), research on the effectiveness of this method in the context of high schools, especially in rural areas such as West Coast Regency, is still limited. Most of the previous research focused more on the basic education environment as researched (Sari et al., 2021) or pesantren-based as researched (Husna, 2022), while the implementation of exemplary methods and habituation at the high school level is still rarely studied in depth. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the exemplary and habitual methods in fostering the morals of students at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat. The results of this research are expected to contribute to developing more effective moral education strategies in the public school environment.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, Ngaras District, Pesisir Barat Regency, from October 2022 to January 2023. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to holistically understand moral education through exemplary methods and habituation applied in schools. Following the opinion of Moleong (2008), qualitative research aims to understand subjects' behavior, perception, motivation, and actions in a natural context, while according to Sugiyono (2019), this method is suitable for exploring phenomena in depth through natural data collection techniques. The data collected included the implementation of moral education programs, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers, and the implementation of exemplary methods and habituation, with data sources coming from primary and secondary data.

1. Primary data was obtained directly through interviews and observations of the primary informants, namely school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat staff. Informants were selected using *the purposive sampling technique*, which is a technique of selecting research subjects based on specific considerations that are considered to have a deep understanding of the research topic. The following is a table of informants involved in this research.

Table 2. Research Informants

Informants	Position/Role
Key Informant	Principal
	Vice Principal for Student Affairs
	Grade XI Teacher
	Supervising Teacher
	Teachers
Supporting Informant	Staff
	Staff

2. Secondary data were obtained from school documentation, books, journals, and previous research relevant to the research topic.

Data collection is carried out by three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation:

1. Observation was carried out in a passive participatory manner, where the researcher directly observed learning activities and interactions in the school environment without being involved in these activities. This technique aims to obtain a real picture of the implementation of exemplary methods and habituation in the moral education of students.
2. Interviews were conducted in depth with school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and vice principals for student affairs. The interview was conducted to explore information about the strategies applied, the challenges faced, and the effectiveness of exemplary methods and habituation in shaping students' character.
3. Documentation is used as supporting data, including school records, photos of learning activities, and relevant learning evaluation results. This documentation helps to reinforce the research findings and provides concrete evidence regarding the implementation of the methods under review.

The data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Data reduction is done by filtering and summarizing data from observations, interviews, and documentation to focus on relevant information. Furthermore, the data is presented as a descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of patterns and findings in the field. Finally, conclusions are drawn gradually and are continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the validity and consistency of the data.

The validity of the data in this study was tested through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time to ensure the validity and empirical representation of the data. Source triangulation was done by comparing information from various informants: school principals, vice principals, teachers, and staff. The triangulation technique involves passive participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, to obtain rich and accurate data both narratively and visually-administratively. Meanwhile, time triangulation is carried out by spreading the data collection process at different moments and days, such as during regular learning, ceremonies, and religious activities, to see the consistency of behavior and the effectiveness of exemplary methods and habituation in a real context.

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Program of Exemplary and Habituation Methods in Student Moral Education at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat.

Morals are the primary foundation in shaping the human personality as a whole. Moral education plays a central role in shaping individual character because it is the foundation for the stability of attitudes, behaviors, and morality. This is in line with the statement of the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat, Mr. Sazili, who emphasized that "The estuary of moral

education is all emphasizing on a person's attitude, character, and behavior that describes the values of goodness that must be possessed and made a habit of students in daily life."

As an educational institution, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat has implemented a systematic approach through habituation and exemplary methods to instill noble moral values in students' daily lives.

1. Habituation Method

Habituation is the process of instilling habits, and habit is a persistent, uniform way of acting. The habituation can be done to get used to behaviors, skills, and thinking patterns. The habituation method aims to make it easier to do something that is applied or assigned. The formation of morals at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, Ngaras District, West Coast Regency is implemented by habituating several activities. These habits include:

a. Habit of Congregational Dhuhr Prayer.

Congregational dhuhr prayer is a routine activity that students at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat must carry out. The habit of this prayer is carried out in two waves. The first wave was carried out after the call to prayer resounded, where students who had been scheduled went directly to the mosque with the teacher, who finished teaching. This is based on the author's interview with Mr. Budi, who stated: "Students of SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat have been accustomed to performing dhuhr prayers in congregation. This activity is a routine and obligation for SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat residents. The congregational dhuhr prayer is implemented in two waves: the first wave after the adhan, and the second after the bell rests..."

b. Infaq Habit Every Friday Morning

Every Friday, at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, the habit of collecting infaq is also applied in the first hour of teaching and learning activities (KBM). The infaq collection was carried out by members of the religious section of the student council, which consisted of six people and was divided into two groups. Each group was tasked with attending classes from class X to class XII. This is based on the author's interview with Mrs. Cici, who stated, "Every Friday morning, there is an infaq collection at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat. Student Council members collect infaq from class X to class XII..."

c. Habit of Asr Prayer in Congregation

Asr prayer in congregation is a custom applied at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, even though it is carried out after class hours or when returning from school. All students are required to participate in the Asr prayer in congregation before leaving school. The congregational Asr prayer is held at 15.15 WIB, although the Asr prayer time begins at 15.00 WIB. This is based on the author's interview with Mr. Budi, who stated, "The congregational Asr prayer is carried out after the end of KBM, with all students required to follow this congregational prayer before leaving school..."

d. Habituation of Tadarus Al-Qur'an

In addition to congregational dhuhr prayers, another custom applied at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat is the tadarus of the Qur'an every morning. This tadarus is carried out in two waves. The first wave is at 06.35 WIB, where representatives from each class selected by the teacher will read the Qur'an in the administration room with loudspeakers so that it can be heard

throughout the school environment. After that, tadarus continued in classes for 15 minutes with the teacher's assistance in the first hour of learning. For students who are not fluent in reading the Qur'an, exceptional guidance is given every Friday. This is based on the author's interview with Mrs. Ida, who stated, "Every morning, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat carries out the tadarus of the Qur'an. At 06.35 WIB, class representatives will read the Qur'an in the administration room. Then, tadarus continued in class for 15 minutes. Students who are not fluent in reading the Qur'an receive guidance every Friday."

e. Habituation of Joint Tahfiz

Every Monday after the flag ceremony, the Qur'an tahfidz activity becomes a routine that is carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat, Ngaras District, West Coast Regency. This activity was carried out together in the middle of the field, guided by officers appointed by the student body, for approximately 20 minutes after the flag ceremony. This is by the author's interview with Mr. Budi, a teacher of class XI, who stated, *"Every Monday morning after the flag ceremony, tahfidz Al-Qur'an activities are carried out in the field, guided by appointed officers. This activity lasted about 20 minutes, and all students were not allowed to leave the field; they sat and followed the officer's reading..."*

f. Habituation of Yasinan and Khitabah

Every Friday morning, a routine activity at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat is to read Surah Yasin together in the field, which starts at 06.30 WIB to 07.00 WIB. This is by the author's interview with Mr. Budi, a class X teacher, who stated, "Yasinan and khitabah activities are carried out every Friday morning in the field, starting at 06.30 WIB to 07.00 WIB. After reading Yasin together, it was followed by a sermon delivered by class representatives, starting from grade XII to class X. This lecture aims to train students' mental and courage to appear in public, and the theme is adjusted to the officers' wishes."

g. Habituation in Dressing

In addition to reciting the Qur'an, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat also pays great attention to the discipline of students' dress. For example, if students wear pencil-style pants, the officer will give the first warning by tearing the edge of the pants about 15 cm. This is by the author's interview with Mr. Dedi, Vice President of Student Affairs, who stated, "in addition to the habit of tadarus Al-Qur'an, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat also pays great attention to the discipline of students' dress. Every Monday after the flag ceremony, the order officer and homeroom teacher check the students' uniforms, and on other days, there is also a surprise check..."

The method of habituation of SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat is explained in the following table.

Table 3. Method of Habituation of Moral Education at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkumat

Activities/Implementation	Description
1. Habit of Congregational Dhuhr Prayer	Students must carry out the Dhuhr prayer in congregation with two waves, carried out after the call to prayer or when the bell rings.
2. Infaq Habit Every Friday Morning	The collection of infaq is carried out by the Student Council every Friday morning in grades X to XII. The

	results of the infaq are used for mosques, disaster assistance, and school residents.
3. Habit of Asr Prayer in Congregation	Carried out after the end of class hours, all students are required to participate in the Asr prayer in congregation.
4. Habituation of Tadarus Al-Qur'an	Every morning, class representatives read the Qur'an in the administration room, then continue tadarus in class for 15 minutes with the teacher's guidance.
5. Habituation of Joint Tahfidz	Every Monday after the flag ceremony, students follow the tahfidz of the Qur'an in the field for 20 minutes.
6. Habituation of Yasinan and Khitabah (Lecture)	Every Friday morning, Yasinan activities are carried out in the field, followed by khitabah (lectures) by class representatives.
7. Habituation in Dressing	Students are required to follow dress codes by school regulations, with regular checks of student uniforms.

The habituation method is applied through various routine and unscheduled activities inside and outside the classroom to instill moral values and positive habits in students. Some forms of habituation that are carried out include:

Table 4. Form of Habituation Activities at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat

Routine Activities	Unscheduled Activities
a. They shake hands when they arrive at school.	a. Use polite language when talking to teachers, friends, and parents.
b. Say and answer greetings.	b. Ask for help politely.
c. Recite prayers before and after studying.	c. Giving reprimands to students who speak a language that is not good.
d. Read short letters.	d. Setting a direct example in building good habits.
e. Behave in an orderly manner and obey school regulations.	
f. Dare to be the ceremony leader and be responsible for school assignments.	
g. Check the cleanliness and neatness of clothes before entering the classroom.	

2. Exemplary method

Character education at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat is carried out through various structured and integrated activities into daily school life. Religious values are the primary foundation built through dhuha prayers, congregational prayers, tadarrus, and tahfidz of the Qur'an. Mrs. Yuli explained that dhuha and tadarrus prayer activities are carried out three times a week to accustom students to be more religious. However, some students are sometimes

absent due to distance from home. In addition, the habit of reading Surah Yasin every Friday and praying Asr in congregation shows the integration of spiritual values in the rhythm of school life.

The value of honesty is instilled through the prohibition of cheating and a culture of transparency, especially in finance. The existence of an honesty canteen is a real practice in fostering student honesty. Although initially it suffered losses, this canteen became an effective means of moral education. Yuke's mother stated, "Although honesty is difficult to implement, we try hard to keep students honest, both in their assignments and exams."

Discipline and hard work are formed through routine activities such as flag ceremonies, physical gymnastics, and participation in congregational prayers. The principal emphasized that discipline is applied in all aspects, including learning. In terms of academics, students must work hard to meet the KKM, especially in moral beliefs, with a minimum score of 80. Mrs. Rosnaeni said that students are trained not to give up easily and to be responsible for their tasks.

Independent values and responsibility are also the focus of coaching. Mrs. Yuni explained that students are trained to take exams without cheating, as a form of independent learning. The value of responsibility is instilled through punctuality in collecting assignments, involvement in class cleanliness, and the implementation of tasks such as daily cults. Mrs. Yuli said that students are responsible for the mandate given and should commit to their role in school.

SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt also fosters creative, democratic, and curious values. Students' creativity can be seen in their participation in competitions at the sub-district to provincial levels. Mrs. Yuli emphasized the importance of honing students' potential through competitive activities. Meanwhile, democratic values are applied in learning that involves students' opinions before the teacher makes a decision, as conveyed by Mrs. Yuke. Students' curiosity is directed by the urge to study the material before entering class, as mentioned by Mrs. Yuli.

The values of tolerance, social care, love of peace, and care for the environment are also developed in real terms. The principal, Mr. Sazili, said students are taught to maintain calm and appreciate other classes. A strong sense of social concern is reflected in the attitude of mutual help and cooperation, especially when students face disasters. Yola Rizma Novitri stated that students are used to helping each other in the dormitory, including in group work and scout activities. Throwing garbage in its place and maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom is also part of cultivating environmental awareness.

Finally, the values of national spirit, love for the homeland, love of reading, and appreciation for achievements are applied through activities such as the flag ceremony every Monday, commemoration of the Indonesian Independence Day, and the habit of using the good Indonesian language. Mr. Dedi said that the activity fostered a sense of nationalism. Reading culture is strengthened by the task of presenting self-reading materials. Yogie Rizmartando revealed that although students are encouraged to read books, many also look for references on the internet. Meanwhile, outstanding students were given awards during the ceremony, as expressed by Mr. Sazili, as a form of appreciation for their efforts and achievements.

The exemplary value applied at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt is explained in the following table.

Table 5. Exemplary Method at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat

Value	Description
1. Religious	Accustoming students to be more religious, despite challenges such as arriving late due to long travel distances.
2. Honesty	Honesty is applied even though it is difficult, and the honesty canteen has positively impacted students' understanding of honest transactions.
3. Tolerance	Students are taught not to disturb other classes and to respect one another.
4. Discipline	Discipline is implemented during routine activities and learning, although there are challenges in its enforcement.
5. Hard Work	Students must work hard, especially in subjects requiring a minimum score standard.
6. Creativity	Teachers provide opportunities for students to think creatively and find solutions, reflected in achievements in academic and non-academic fields.
7. Independence	They should be independent during exams and assignments and take responsibility for their work.
8. Democratic	The learning process involves student participation in expressing opinions and aspirations.
9. Curiosity	Students are motivated to explore the material in depth before lessons begin.
10. National Spirit	Students actively participate in Independence Day activities, demonstrating a love for their country.
11. Patriotism	Instilling pride in the homeland through flag ceremonies and proper language.
12. Appreciating Achievement	Awards such as certificates or trophies are given to outstanding students for their efforts.
13. Friendly/Communicative	Teachers care for students' social conditions through social activities and joint environmental programs.
14. Peace-loving	Creating a peaceful atmosphere through polite and respectful student behavior.
15. Love of Reading	Encouraging broad and deep reading habits, although students sometimes prefer the internet as a source.
16. Social Care	Social concern is practiced both in and outside school, such as helping peers and participating in social events.
17. Responsibility	Teaching students to be responsible for both individual and group tasks assigned to them.

D. DISCUSSION

In education, the success of the learning process cannot be separated from the selection of the proper method. The learning method not only functions as a means of delivering material but also as a tool to form character, especially in moral education. One of the most effective methods in learning values is the exemplary method, which, in its implementation at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat, significantly shapes students' moral behavior.

1. Effectiveness of the Exemplary Method

Theoretically, the effectiveness of the exemplary method can be explained through Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which emphasizes that the learning process does not always occur through direct experience, but also through observation of the model. In this context, teachers become models of moral behavior observed by students. When students see teachers consistently showing honesty, responsibility, and empathy in their daily lives, they tend to imitate these behaviors because of the process of modeling, retention, and social reinforcement. The accompanying affective experiences reinforce this process—students see and feel the impact of exemplary emotional and social skills.

More than just observation, the success of internalizing moral values through example is also greatly influenced by reinforcement, as stated by B.F. Skinner in his theory of behaviorism. Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat provide positive reinforcement through praise, recognition, or affirmative responses to good behavior by students. This strengthens moral behavior because students realize that their actions are valued. Meanwhile, negative reinforcement in the form of subtle reprimands or group reflections is used to direct students who violate norms. The importance of reinforcement also discusses the nature of various studies. Research by Rosita & Muhtar (2022) shows that reinforcing or strengthening is important in character education because it helps reinforce positive behaviors that are expected to become habits and part of students' personalities.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the exemplary method in shaping students' character reflects the success in reaching the three dimensions of character according to Lickona (1991). The three dimensions—*knowing the good*, *desiring the good*, and *doing the good*—are evident in students' behavior at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat. *Knowing the good* is reflected in students' understanding of values such as honesty, discipline, and empathy that are instilled through learning and the example of teachers. This understanding then develops into *desiring the good*, when students desire to do good voluntarily, such as helping friends who are in difficulty or keeping the classroom clean without being told (Kamila et al., 2025). The highest stage, *doing the good*, can be seen from the consistency of students' positive behavior in daily life, for example, by still showing responsibility and integrity even though the teacher does not directly supervise them. All three show that moral values are understood cognitively, lived, and manifested in concrete actions.

Implementing character education methods through habituation, as shown in the example at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat, is in line with the core values in Islamic education. As explained by Ulum (2018) and Elmontadzery et al. (2024), the internalization of Islamic educational values, such as monotheism, morality, justice, responsibility, and honesty, becomes the foundation in forming individuals who are not only spiritually religious but also

morally in social life. These values are not enough to be taught cognitively, but must be internalized through real and continuous practice.

In this context, the habituation method applied by teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat is more effective because it is supported by the pesantren culture inherent in most of its educators. This pesantren's background is an integral part of their daily lives. According to Wirayanti et al. (2024), teachers not only convey material or provide reinforcement, but also become a real representation of internalized Islamic values, such as discipline, manners, and responsibility. This reinforces the view that character education based on religious values must be holistic, where *teaching*, *modeling*, *reinforcing*, and *habituating* complement each other in character formation (Lickona, 1991).

However, the implementation of this method is not without challenges. One of the obstacles faced is the inconsistency of the behavior of non-academic teachers, which sometimes shows an attitude contrary to the values taught. In addition, some students come from family backgrounds that do not support the values formed at school, so the transfer of values to the home environment is hampered. Another challenge is the limited informal interaction between teachers and students due to the dense curriculum, even though informal spaces are often important in forming meaningful closeness and examples.

In the context of previous research, research findings show that the exemplary method is efficacious in improving responsibility and discipline behavior among students (Shodiq & Kuswanto, 2024). Research by Faiz (2019) states that teacher exemplification has less significant impact if a structured school program does not support it, while at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat, the example is supported by routine habituation and moral evaluation that runs systematically, such as *morning murojaah*, *class reflection*, and students' daily journals.

Indicators of the success of this method can be seen from several concrete evidence of changes in student behavior, such as: a) A decrease in the number of cases of late school entry in the last three months from an average of 15 cases per week to only 3 cases. b) Environmental cleanliness activities that were previously only carried out by picket officers are now carried out voluntarily by students without being asked. c) Increased student initiative in reminding friends to pray, using polite language, and maintaining class cleanliness. This success demonstrates the effectiveness of the exemplary method as a pedagogical approach. It proves that students learn about and live in virtue when authentic figures consistently display moral values.

2. Effectiveness of the Habituation Method

Based on the results of observations and interviews with teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat, the habituation method is applied systematically in shaping students' character by emphasizing religious and moral values. Moral education at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkuntat is applied through various habituation methods that instill moral and religious values in students' daily lives. Habituation is carried out to teach students to discipline time and worship correctly, and strengthen the sense of togetherness and cohesiveness among them. Research by Saryadi et al. (2020) shows that the habit of worship provides various positive spiritual, emotional, and social benefits for student development. Through this activity, students are accustomed to remembering and getting closer to Allah SWT, so they grow a sense of love

for worship and religious values in daily life. In addition, the school also has an infaq habit every Friday morning, where students collect infaq managed by the student council and use it for social activities, such as disaster relief, mosques, and madrasah residents. This activity aims to foster a sense of social concern and the spirit of sharing among students.

In addition to religious activities, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt also pays attention to students' habituation regarding neatness and dress discipline. Students are required to follow the dress code set by the school, with regular checks of their uniforms. This habituation aims to teach students the importance of discipline, cleanliness, and respect for the rules that exist in schools. Overall, through these various habits, SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt seeks to form the character of students who are not only intelligent in the academic field but also have noble morals and can carry themselves well in society. This is in line with the results of research by Mustad (2019), which shows that the application of character education through the habituation model has improved student discipline.

In its implementation, teachers not only play the role of verbal conveyors of moral information but also as facilitators who create an environment that supports positive behavior through daily routines, such as greetings, maintaining cleanliness, and using polite language in interactions. Research by Arifin et al. (2024) also highlights the role of teachers in character education in schools. The findings state that teachers are vital in shaping student character as educators, role models, classroom managers, motivators, and evaluators in the learning process. Several factors, such as a conducive family environment and adequate facilities and infrastructure, also support the success of student character formation.

Theoretically, this approach is relevant to the *operant conditioning* theory of Ferster & Skinner (1957), which states that behavior can be shaped through positive or negative reinforcement. In the school context, a form of reinforcement is given through praise or social reinforcement for students who show good behavior, such as helping teachers, being disciplined on time, and being polite. Instead, educational reprimands are given to students who have not shown behavior that matches the expected grades. This strengthening pattern is carried out consistently, so that students are obedient because of supervision and begin to internalize these values as part of internal moral awareness.

This habituation process also shows a close relationship with the social learning theory of Bandura (1986), which emphasizes that individuals learn through observation of significant figures around them. As a figure respected by students, the teacher becomes a real model in applying the moral values taught. The teacher is acting, speaking, and behaving; this example becomes an observational learning tool for students. This strengthens Lickona's (1991) view that effective character education requires habituation that is integrated into school life and strengthened by the example of the surrounding environment.

However, the implementation of this method is not entirely without hindrance. One of the main challenges faced is the lack of continuity between the school and home environments. Research by Fikriyah et al. (2022) states that children will imitate all parental behaviors, so parents need to set a good example. Character cultivation can be done by accustoming children to positive things, communicating openly, and involving them in household activities. In this way, children will grow up confident, strong, and able to adjust to their social environment. Not all parents provide the same reinforcement of values at home,

so internalizing character is not optimal for some students. In addition, differences in student characteristics also affect the effectiveness of the reinforcement given; Some students require a more individualized and adaptive approach.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the exemplary and habitual methods applied at SMA Negeri 1 Bengkunt are effective in shaping students' character, especially in moral learning. Exemplary Method. This method is effective because students learn through observation of the teacher as an example, which shows moral values in daily life. This method's success is supported by teachers' competence and a supportive environment. The habituation method is carried out through positive habits that are applied regularly. Teachers act as facilitators, using positive and negative reinforcement to instill moral values in students.

To increase effectiveness, it is recommended that teachers provide more varied examples, utilize interactive learning media, and optimize rewards. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community also needs to be strengthened, and schools can develop policies that support the implementation of this method. Further research into different contexts, age groups, and the role of external factors is also needed.

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