

Habituation of Asmaul Husna as a Strategy for Developing Students' Religious Character: A Qualitative Study in a Rural Madrasah

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation process, students' responses, and challenges of *Asmaul Husna* habituation as part of religious character development at MI Ma'arif Sambeng. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings. The results indicate that *Asmaul Husna* habituation is carried out routinely every morning through several stages, including prayer, recitation, explanation of meanings, and motivational reinforcement. Most students demonstrate a positive level of enthusiasm in participating in the activity, although some remain passive and less focused during the process. The habituation contributes to the development of religious behaviors, such as improved discipline, the habit of greeting others, increased calmness during learning, and enhanced memorization of *Asmaul Husna*. However, the implementation still faces several challenges, including student boredom, weather conditions, limited learning media, and insufficient variation in teaching methods. These findings suggest that consistent religious habituation plays an important role in fostering students' religious character and requires pedagogical innovation to enhance its effectiveness and meaningfulness.

Keywords: Asmaul Husna; Religious Habituation; Religious Character.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis proses pelaksanaan, respons siswa, serta kendala pembiasaan *Asmaul Husna* sebagai bagian dari pembentukan karakter religius di MI Ma'arif Sambeng. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, serta triangulasi untuk memastikan validitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembiasaan *Asmaul Husna* dilaksanakan secara rutin setiap pagi melalui tahapan doa, pelafalan, penjelasan makna, dan pemberian motivasi. Sebagian besar siswa menunjukkan antusiasme yang baik dalam mengikuti kegiatan, meskipun masih terdapat beberapa siswa yang pasif dan kurang fokus selama proses berlangsung. Pembiasaan ini berkontribusi terhadap terbentuknya perilaku religius, seperti meningkatnya kedisiplinan, kebiasaan memberi salam, ketenangan dalam belajar, serta bertambahnya hafalan *Asmaul Husna*. Namun demikian, pelaksanaan kegiatan masih menghadapi berbagai kendala, antara lain kejenuhan siswa, kondisi cuaca, keterbatasan media pembelajaran, serta kurangnya variasi metode yang digunakan guru. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pembiasaan keagamaan yang dilakukan secara konsisten memiliki peran penting dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa dan memerlukan dukungan inovasi pedagogis agar pelaksanaannya lebih optimal dan bermakna.

Kata Kunci: Asmaul Husna; Pembiasaan Keagamaan; Karakter Religius.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of religious habituation in elementary schools has become one of the widely adopted strategies to strengthen students' character education and spirituality (Mubin & Furqon, 2023). In recent years, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have positioned routine religious practices as an integral component of school culture, including the daily recitation of *Asmaul Husna* each morning. This activity is not merely intended as a ritual to begin the day, but also serves as a pedagogical medium to cultivate mental readiness, emotional calmness, and internalized religious behavior from an early age. In the context of elementary education, the developmental stage of children who are in the early phases of moral growth makes repetitive practices strategically valuable for instilling divine values and noble character in a continuous and sustainable manner.

The urgency of this phenomenon becomes increasingly apparent as various studies indicate a decline in public moral exemplarity and a crisis of role models, both of which affect the process of moral internalization among children (Sidik, 2024). The school environment thus becomes an essential arena for fostering stable and consistent character formation, particularly through habituation-based programs that provide concrete examples and repeated practice (Elliani et al., 2024). Moreover, modern social dynamics such as shifting interaction patterns, the influence of digital devices, and the weakening of familial social bonds necessitate a more significant role for schools in nurturing students' religious values. Consequently, the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* is not merely a ritual, but represents a form of transformative character education oriented toward developing students' spiritual, moral, and social dimensions.

Scholarly studies on the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* demonstrate that this practice holds significant potential in shaping students' religious attitudes and improving the quality of their behavior. Sholihah, (2022) found that the routine recitation of *Asmaul Husna* in elementary schools strengthens students' discipline and enhances their sense of calm during the learning process. Another study by Nafi'ah, (2024) shows that this activity contributes to more effective classroom management, as students become better prepared and more focused after reciting *Asmaul Husna*. From a psychological perspective, Rohmadani & Winarsih, (2025) reveal that the use of *Asmaul Husna* in hypnotherapy techniques can reduce anxiety, stress, and depression among first-year university students. This indicates that *Asmaul Husna* habituation carries psychological dimensions that may positively influence emotional stability and behavior. Meanwhile, religious education studies such as that conducted by Rohman, (2020) affirm that the practice of *Asmaul Husna* recitation plays an important role in preserving students' theological potential and reinforcing the formation of their religious character.

Although these studies demonstrate significant findings, most research still concentrates on the *outcomes* of *Asmaul Husna* habituation. Studies that explore the dynamics of implementation, student engagement, and the factors that hinder the internalization of meaning remain limited. In addition, a number of existing studies were conducted in urban schools or educational institutions with relatively adequate facilities. A research gap therefore emerges, as the context of rural *madrasah ibtidaiyah* has distinct social, cultural, and resource characteristics that shape unique dynamics in the value-internalization process. Previous studies have also tended to



emphasize improvements in memorization or ritual performativity, while paying less attention to how a religious habitus is formed through everyday interactions and the pedagogical relationships between teachers and students.

Thus, studies on the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* require deeper attention to processual aspects namely, how the activity is designed, practiced, received, and internalized by students. The internalization of values does not occur automatically through repetitive rituals; it requires a supportive learning environment, meaningful instructional methods, and emotional engagement on the part of learners. A qualitative research approach is highly relevant for understanding these dynamics, as it enables an in-depth exploration of social and pedagogical realities, including students' responses, teachers' strategies, and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of the habituation process. This need becomes increasingly urgent considering that the effectiveness of character education depends on the consistency of practice, the relevance of activities, and the quality of educational interactions within it (Simbolon, 2024).

The context of MI Ma'arif Sambeng is particularly compelling to examine, as it represents a rural *madrasah* with limited facilities yet consistently implements religious habituation programs. Its relatively homogeneous social environment and the strong religious culture of the surrounding community offer potential conditions for cultivating a more robust religious habitus. However, pedagogical challenges such as variations in students' abilities, limited methodological innovation, and constrained learning resources constitute factors that require critical analysis. The daily habituation of *Asmaul Husna* provides opportunities for observing the natural process of value internalization, including students' spontaneous responses and the relationship between religious rituals and their social behavior. This complexity positions MI Ma'arif Sambeng as a research site with rich empirical dynamics and strong relevance to studies on religiously based character education.

Interest in this topic is driven by the academic need to broaden the understanding of how character education is implemented in Islamic-based schools through practical and contextual approaches. An in-depth examination of *Asmaul Husna* habituation not only contributes to the field of Islamic education but also enriches the broader discourse on character education and value habituation in a global context. The routine implementation of the activity, the diversity of student engagement, and the dynamic interactions between teachers and students provide an important space for understanding how divine values can be meaningfully internalized. As a qualitative study, this research has the potential to present a holistic depiction of the habituation process, identify its challenges and opportunities, and offer applicable pedagogical recommendations. Thus, this study not only addresses existing gaps in the literature but also contributes to the development of character education practices in *madrasah*.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze in depth the implementation of *Asmaul Husna* habituation, students' responses, its contribution to the formation of religious character, and the challenges encountered in its implementation at MI Ma'arif Sambeng. The significance of this research lies in the need to develop a model of religious habituation that is not merely ritualistic, but also capable of fostering meaningful value internalization, adaptive to students' needs, and relevant to the challenges of character education in the modern era.



METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of the *Asmaul Husna* habituation process at MI Ma'arif Sambeng. This approach is chosen because the phenomenon under investigation is naturalistic, contextual, and closely related to the formation of religious character, which cannot be adequately measured using quantitative instruments. Furthermore, this research does not aim to test hypotheses or examine relationships between variables, but rather to comprehensively describe the reality occurring in the field and to understand the meanings underlying the habituation practices. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate, as it enables the systematic, factual, and in-depth portrayal of the phenomenon within its original context. In line with John W. Creswell, (2018) qualitative research allows for the exploration of meaning, subjective experiences, and the socio-spiritual dynamics that emerge during the habituation activities. Accordingly, this method provides space for the researcher to examine how teachers facilitate the habituation process, how students respond to it, and which religious values are internalized through the practice. Moreover, this approach enables the researcher to capture the complexity of educational interactions that cannot be reduced to numerical data, but instead require deep interpretation of participants' experiences and behaviors in real-life situations.

The study was conducted purposively at MI Ma'arif Sambeng, a rural community-based *madrasah* that has consistently implemented a daily *Asmaul Husna* habituation program every morning. The research participants consisted of the principal, 2 teachers, and 20 students from grades 3 to 6, who were selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the habituation activities. The selection of participants was carried out purposively to ensure that the informants possessed relevant experience and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, and were able to provide rich and diverse data in accordance with the requirements of qualitative research. Data were collected through participatory observation to examine the habituation practices firsthand, semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' perspectives and students' experiences, and documentation. Technique and source triangulation were employed to enhance data credibility, ensuring that the findings did not rely on a single form of information and strengthening the validity of the interpretations drawn from the participants' experiences.

Data analysis employed the Miles & Huberman, (1994) model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing carried out simultaneously with the data collection process. Data reduction was conducted by filtering essential information from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents, which was then organized into descriptive narratives to map patterns, categories, and interrelated findings. Conclusion drawing was performed iteratively to produce a holistic understanding of the habituation mechanisms, teacher strategies, student engagement, and the impact on the development of religious character. Through this systematic and in-depth approach, the study is expected to provide meaningful contributions to understanding the practice of *Asmaul Husna* habituation within rural *madrasah* settings and its relevance for strengthening character education in the context of Islamic education.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of *Asmaul Husna* Habituation

The implementation of *Asmaul Husna* habituation at MI Ma'arif Sambeng is carried out consistently every morning from 07:00 to 07:15. This activity has become a daily routine conducted before the formal learning process begins. All students gather in the school courtyard, a space chosen for its capacity to accommodate the entire student body and to allow teachers to monitor the activity comprehensively. The habituation is led by teachers on a rotating basis, although students who are deemed capable are occasionally given the opportunity to lead as well. This rotation of leadership appears to be part of the school's efforts to foster students' confidence and to provide simple training in leadership skills. The repeated implementation of these practices aligns with the concept of character education, which emphasizes the importance of habituation in shaping students' behavior (Ridha Fitriani J. Ode Bau et al., 2025).

The activity is carried out in several fixed stages that are repeated daily. The first stage begins with the recitation of the morning prayer, followed by all students. This is then continued with the collective recitation of *Asmaul Husna*. The pronunciation of the names of Allah is guided by the teacher's rhythm, creating a harmonious and orderly atmosphere. The next stage involves a brief explanation of one selected name of Allah for the day. This explanation is concise, focuses on the fundamental meaning, and is delivered in simple language to ensure it is easily understood by both lower and upper grade students. The early introduction to the meanings of *Asmaul Husna* is essential, as each of Allah's names embodies moral values that can be exemplified and applied in daily life (Isrofiah & Ifa Nurhayati, 2022). After the explanation, the teacher provides a short motivational message, usually related to everyday morals, discipline, and the importance of behaving well within the school environment. This activity, which lasts approximately fifteen minutes, is attended by nearly all students. Nevertheless, some students appear to be less focused during the habituation process, as evidenced by behaviors such as not fully following the recitation or occasionally talking with peers. Despite this, the habituation activity generally proceeds in an orderly manner and follows the predetermined daily schedule.

Student Responses and Engagement

Students' responses to the *Asmaul Husna* habituation demonstrate a clear variation in engagement between those who participate enthusiastically and those who follow more passively. The majority of students appear to engage in the activity with considerable enthusiasm. They recite *Asmaul Husna* aloud and consistently follow the teacher's instructions. When the teacher provides a model for recitation, many students make an effort to match the intonation and pace of the activity leader. This indicates a strong willingness and interest in actively participating in the religious practice.

On the other hand, some students appear less active. They merely follow the movements or open their mouths without producing audible recitation. A few students even seem to divert their attention to other matters while the activity is in progress. This passive behavior is more commonly observed among lower-grade students, who generally have shorter attention spans compared to upper-grade students. When the teacher delivers a brief explanation about one of the names of Allah, some students also do not fully pay attention; they may talk to peers, move around restlessly, or simply stand without showing interest in the teacher's explanation. This variation in



levels of engagement indicates that the process of internalizing values through habituation requires time, repetition, and approaches that are aligned with students' developmental stages (Khusna et al., 2026).

The differences in enthusiasm are quite notable between upper- and lower-grade students. Upper-grade students, specifically those in grades 5 and 6, tend to be more active, both in reciting *Asmaul Husna* and when asked to provide examples or lead the activity. They also respond more quickly when the teacher delivers motivational messages. In contrast, lower-grade students appear to require more direct guidance, repeated instructions, and closer supervision to participate effectively. Nevertheless, all students maintain their formation and follow the activity to completion each morning.

Observed Impacts

Based on observations and teachers' statements, the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* produces several noticeable impacts on students' daily behavior. One of the most apparent changes is an increase in students' discipline. They appear more orderly and organized during prayer and while lining up to enter the classroom after the activity. Teachers reported that the morning routine helps create a more conducive physical and mental environment before learning begins. After reciting *Asmaul Husna*, students seem calmer and more prepared to engage in lessons, allowing the learning process to commence in a relatively more orderly classroom setting. This finding indicates that religious habituation can function as a means of strengthening students' discipline and enhancing their readiness for learning (Basri et al., 2023).

In addition to improved discipline, changes in students' religious habits were also observed. One notable change is the increased frequency with which students greet teachers when meeting them within the school environment. Previously, this practice did not occur consistently among all students, but after the habituation became routine, the act of giving greetings appears to have become more ingrained in their interactions. Teachers also reported that students began to demonstrate better manners and politeness in their daily activities.

From a cognitive perspective, students appear to begin memorizing between twenty and fifty names of Allah. The number of names memorized varies among students, but overall, it indicates that the routine morning recitation is quite effective in supporting the memorization process. Some students are even able to recall the meanings of several names that are frequently explained by the teacher. This demonstrates that the habituation activity impacts not only affective and behavioral aspects but also contributes to students' foundational religious knowledge.

Teachers also observed that after participating in the habituation, students appear more focused and better prepared to begin the learning process. They reported that the classroom atmosphere becomes more conducive because students have engaged in an initial activity that calms and directs their attention before the core lessons commence. This aligns with the objectives of habituation practices implemented in various *madrasah*, which aim to create a spiritual environment that supports students' readiness to learn.

Implementation Challenges

Although the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* is conducted routinely, its implementation is not without challenges that occasionally disrupt the smoothness of the activity. One of the most frequent obstacles is weather conditions. Since the



activity takes place in the school courtyard, hot mornings or rain necessitate relocating the activity to another area or adjusting its duration. During extremely hot weather, some students appear less enthusiastic in participating. Conversely, when it rains, the activity must be conducted on the classroom veranda or in a smaller hall, which reduces comfort and affects the neatness of student formation.

In addition to weather factors, student boredom also poses a significant challenge to the habituation process. When the activity is conducted in a monotonous pattern, some students easily lose focus. Teachers recognize that without methodological variation, students tend to participate merely as a routine, without gaining a deeper understanding. The absence of structured modules or instructional aids to explain the meanings of *Asmaul Husna* is another challenge. Teachers often provide only brief verbal explanations, without using visual media or other supporting materials that could help students grasp the meanings of each name of Allah more concretely.

The limited methodological innovation is also felt by several teachers. Those leading the activity often repeat the same habituation pattern each day due to the absence of standardized guidelines or specialized training on developing engaging *Asmaul Husna* habituation methods. This limitation results in minimal activity variation, making it more difficult to maintain students' enthusiasm.

Some teachers also reported that the habituation process does not fully accommodate the needs of all grade levels. Lower-grade students require more intensive guidance, while upper-grade students need greater challenges to remain actively engaged. The limited number of teaching staff available to supervise all classes simultaneously often prevents the habituation activities from being optimally focused on each group.

These challenges align with previous research findings indicating that religious habituation programs often face obstacles related to implementation consistency, teacher readiness, and limited supporting resources (Mubin & Moh. Arif Furqon, 2023). Therefore, although the *Asmaul Husna* habituation program has positive impacts, efforts for improvement and additional support are still necessary to ensure that the program can operate more effectively and sustainably.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the research findings is aimed at interpreting the empirical results related to the implementation of *Asmaul Husna* habituation at MI Ma'arif Sambeng and connecting them with educational theories, previous literature, and the context of character education practices based on religious values. Overall, the study indicates that *Asmaul Husna* habituation has a significant impact on the development of students' religious character, although there remains room for improvement in terms of methodological variation, meaning-making, and participatory strategies. Through four main sub-sections in this discussion, the research findings are analytically linked to the conceptual framework presented earlier in the manuscript, providing a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness, implementation dynamics, emerging challenges, and implications for the development of character education practices in elementary *madrasah* settings.



Habituation as a Strategy for Character Development

The research findings indicate that the routine morning habituation of *Asmaul Husna* successfully establishes a stable and sustainable religious culture within the school environment. This practice aligns with the concept of habituation in educational psychology, which asserts that behaviors performed repeatedly will form more permanent behavioral patterns (Sukmah et al., 2025). This is further supported by Elizabeth Bergner Hurlock, (1978), who argues that habits have long-term effects in shaping children's character and attitudes, particularly during the elementary school years, when habit formation remains highly plastic and responsive to environmental structures.

The alignment between the habituation routine and the character education framework is also evident in national literature. Parida, (2020) emphasizes that integrated character education is effective when implemented through repetitive, structured activities supported by a conducive school culture. This condition is further corroborated by Parida, Afiqoh, (2020), who explain that religious activities in schools, such as collective prayers or *dhikr*, have been shown to strengthen students' discipline and behavioral orderliness.

The consistency of the practice at MI Ma'arif Sambeng, using a habituation-based approach, also aligns with PDF tersedia di ResearchGate found that the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* recitation effectively enhances spiritual awareness while fostering students' calmness findings that parallel the results of this study.

Student Participation and Responses

Students' generally positive responses indicate that the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* is accepted as a meaningful part of the school routine. However, field findings reveal variations in students' levels of engagement. Some students appear enthusiastic and participate attentively, while others demonstrate inconsistency, driven by boredom or a limited understanding of the meanings of the divine attributes being recited.

This heterogeneity in responses can be interpreted through the lens of meaningful learning, as proposed by David Paul Ausubel, (1968), who asserts that learning is more effective when students can connect activities to personal meaning. In this context, habituation that focuses solely on verbal repetition without conceptual elaboration tends to reduce cognitive engagement, particularly for students with diverse learning styles.

Islamic education literature also supports the view that varied approaches can enhance student participation. Shoimah, (2019) demonstrates that learning strategies such as *Take and Give*, *Course Review Horay*, or other creative methods can improve students' understanding and enthusiasm for *Asmaul Husna* material. Similarly, Fatma Haji Moh Amin, (2025) found that the *Make A Match* method makes the process of introducing *Asmaul Husna* more engaging and relevant for students in *madrasah ibtidaiyah*.

These findings indicate that, to achieve optimal participation, habituation activities should not focus solely on routine. They should also incorporate varied approaches that enhance students' affective and cognitive engagement.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Although the habituation program has been implemented effectively, this study identifies several challenges that need to be addressed to maximize its impact. One of the most prominent obstacles is the lack of variation in the activities, which can lead



to boredom among some students. When the activity is conducted monotonously, students tend to experience decreased concentration, ultimately reducing the quality of their participation.

This challenge aligns with the findings of Miftakhul & Muhammad Yusron, (2025) in a study on religious habituation at SD Negeri Pekarungan Sukodono, which reported that the success of such programs largely depends on teachers' ability to present activities that are contextual and engaging. In the context of MI Ma'arif Sambeng, such variations could include the use of hand movements, *Asmaul Husna* songs, visual media, or educational games.

Another challenge is the limited availability of modules or instructional materials that explain the meanings of each *Asmaul Husna*. As a result, the habituation tends to remain a ritualistic activity that does not fully promote cognitive learning. This finding aligns with the study by Annisa & Ningsih, (2024) which emphasizes the importance of creative learning strategies to ensure that students not only memorize but also understand the values contained in *Asmaul Husna*.

Internalization of Religious Values

The findings of this study indicate that the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* does not automatically lead to the internalization of religious values unless it is supported by a systematic and reflective learning process. Repetitive activities tend to form behavioral habits at a superficial level when they are not accompanied by a conceptual understanding of the meanings embedded in each of the divine names. Therefore, routine habituation must be integrated with cognitive processes in order to foster students' awareness and internalization of values (Dede Abdul Hakim, 2022).

The internalization of religious values requires the simultaneous engagement of both cognitive and affective domains (Astarina et al., 2026). The connection between students' understanding of meaning and their personal experiences plays a crucial role in deepening the internalization process. When students are able to relate the meanings of *Asmaul Husna* to their daily lives, habituation functions not merely as a ritual activity but as a medium for developing deeper religious awareness and attitudes. Conversely, when habituation is carried out without adequate meaning-making, it risks remaining at the level of symbolic practice without producing significant transformation in students' attitudes. This finding is consistent with Rohmadani & Winarsih, (2025), who emphasize that understanding religious values contributes to individuals' emotional stability and self-awareness.

This study highlights the importance of integrating recitation, meaning-making, and reflection as a unified process within habituation practices. The role of teachers is particularly crucial in facilitating this process through contextual, communicative, and developmentally appropriate approaches (Putri & Kurniawan, 2024). Thus, the habituation of *Asmaul Husna* should not be viewed merely as a routine activity, but as a pedagogical process designed to support the continuous development of students' religious understanding and attitudes. This finding aligns with the concept of character education through habituation, which emphasizes the importance of consistent practice supported by meaningful engagement and role modeling within the educational environment (Mubin & Furqon, 2023).



CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the routine habituation of *Asmaul Husna* at MI Ma'arif Sambeng makes a tangible contribution to the development of students' religious character and creates a more conducive learning environment. The structured morning routine has been shown to promote discipline, orderliness, and students' emotional readiness before engaging in learning activities. Students' generally positive responses indicate that the practice is well-received, although variations in participation levels among different age groups were observed.

The observed impacts, such as increased habits of greeting others, calmer learning behavior, and memorization of *Asmaul Husna*, suggest that divine values can be internalized through consistent habituation practices. Nevertheless, the study also revealed challenges in implementation, particularly related to student boredom, weather conditions, and limited instructional media. These findings highlight the need for methodological innovation and more structured learning resources to enable deeper understanding of the meanings of each name of Allah.

Academically, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on the effectiveness of religious habituation in elementary education and opens avenues for further studies on the psychological mechanisms involved in structured *dhikr* practices for children. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for *madrrasah* and elementary schools in designing character education programs based on divine values that are more creative, meaningful, and sustainable

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