

# A Model of Religious Value Internalization through Daily Habituation in Early Childhood Character Formation

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Received: 09-06-2026 | Revised: 18-06-2026 | Accepted: 20-06-2026

## ABSTRACT

The internalization of religious values in early childhood is essential for fostering religious character; however, the processes through which such values become embedded in children's daily behavior remain insufficiently understood. This study aimed to analyze the process of religious value internalization through daily habituation in strengthening early childhood character. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed at TK IT Al-Mumtaz Pontianak, involving three teachers as research participants. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that religious value internalization develops through three interconnected stages: religious ritual habituation as the value introduction stage, socio-religious habituation as the value cultivation stage, and moral habituation as the character reinforcement stage. These stages collectively facilitate the transformation of religious values from ritual experiences into relatively stable character traits. The study contributes a conceptual model of religious value internalization that highlights the developmental relationship between ritual, social, and moral habituation. The findings provide practical guidance for designing religious character education programs in early childhood settings.

*Internalisasi nilai religius pada anak usia dini memiliki peran penting dalam pembentukan karakter religius, namun proses bagaimana nilai tersebut berkembang menjadi perilaku sehari-hari masih memerlukan kajian yang lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses internalisasi nilai religius melalui pembiasaan harian dalam memperkuat karakter anak usia dini. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang dilaksanakan di TK IT Al-Mumtaz Pontianak dengan melibatkan tiga orang guru sebagai partisipan penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai religius berlangsung melalui tiga tahapan yang saling berkaitan, yaitu pembiasaan ritual keagamaan sebagai tahap pengenalan nilai, pembiasaan sosial religius sebagai tahap penanaman nilai, dan pembiasaan moral sebagai tahap penguatan karakter. Ketiga tahapan tersebut membentuk proses yang memungkinkan nilai religius berkembang menjadi karakter yang relatif menetap. Penelitian ini menghasilkan model konseptual internalisasi nilai religius yang dapat digunakan sebagai rujukan dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter berbasis religius pada anak usia dini.*

**Keywords:** character, daily habituation, early childhood, religious value

## Introduction

Character education has become a central concern in contemporary educational discourse because educational success is no longer assessed solely through academic achievement but also through learners' ability to internalize values that guide their behavior and social interactions. A growing body of research indicates that character development during early childhood plays a significant role in shaping personality, moral integrity, social

competence, and children's readiness to face future challenges (Fu et al., 2026; Maksum et al., 2025). Early childhood is widely recognized as a critical developmental period during which children begin to establish habits, attitudes, behavioral patterns, and value systems that influence their future development. Therefore, early childhood education should not only focus on cognitive growth but should also serve as a foundation for character formation through meaningful and continuous learning experiences that support children's holistic development.

Among the various dimensions of character education, religious character occupies a particularly important position because it serves as a foundation for the development of other positive character traits. Religious character extends beyond the performance of religious rituals and encompasses values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and social concern that are rooted in religious teachings (Kambali & Karim, 2026; Maksum et al., 2025). These values provide children with a moral framework that helps them distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in everyday life. In this regard, religious education is understood as a process of value transmission aimed at cultivating moral awareness while guiding children to apply religious principles in their interactions with others and their surrounding environment (Fu et al., 2026). Strengthening religious character from an early age is therefore essential for nurturing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally and spiritually grounded.

The development of religious character in young children does not occur instantaneously but emerges through a gradual and continuous process of value internalization. Religious value internalization refers to the process through which religious principles introduced from external sources are progressively accepted, understood, internalized, and expressed in children's daily behavior. This process can be explained through Social Learning Theory, which posits that children acquire behaviors and values by observing and imitating significant role models, particularly teachers and parents (Maksum et al., 2025; Masdul et al., 2024). Furthermore, the constructivist perspective suggests that children actively construct their understanding of religious values through direct experiences, social interactions, and reflective engagement within their learning environments (Kelley & Lapsley, 2025; Kroflič & Turnšek, 2018). These theoretical perspectives imply that successful value internalization depends not only on the transmission of religious knowledge but also on the quality of learning experiences that allow children to connect religious values with their everyday realities.

One of the most widely adopted approaches for facilitating the internalization of religious values in early childhood education is daily habituation. Habituation is considered effective because it enables children to learn through repeated experiences, allowing religious values to move beyond cognitive understanding and become embedded in everyday behavior. Previous studies have demonstrated that religious habituation can be implemented through daily prayers, worship practices, storytelling activities, role-playing, collaborative learning experiences, and consistent role modeling by teachers and parents (Istiyani et al., 2024; Masdul et al., 2024; Nuha et al., 2021). In addition, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy emphasizes exemplary conduct, motivation, and guidance as essential elements in character formation, providing a strong conceptual foundation for habituation-based learning (Ningrum et al., 2025). Through continuous and meaningful repetition, religious values are more likely to become deeply rooted in children's attitudes and actions.

Previous research has consistently reported the positive contribution of religious value internalization through habituation to various aspects of children's character development. Sustained habituation practices have been associated with improvements in prosocial behavior,

empathy, responsibility, discipline, moral integrity, and children's ability to establish positive social relationships (Fu et al., 2026; Kambali & Karim, 2026; Maksum et al., 2025). Furthermore, instructional approaches such as storytelling, role modeling, religious rituals, interactive discussions, and repeated practical activities have been shown to facilitate children's understanding of religious values in ways that are both meaningful and developmentally appropriate (Istiyani et al., 2024; Masdul et al., 2024; Winkler, 2022). Other studies have highlighted the importance of integrating local wisdom, indigenous languages, and cultural values into learning processes because these contextual elements make religious teachings more relevant and accessible to children's daily experiences ((Astawan et al., 2025; Fauziddin et al., 2023). Collectively, these findings demonstrate the potential of habituation as an effective strategy for strengthening character education grounded in religious values.

Despite these promising findings, the effectiveness of religious value internalization remains influenced by a variety of supporting and inhibiting factors. Strong collaboration among families, schools, and communities, the presence of teachers as positive role models, and the use of culturally responsive approaches have been identified as key factors contributing to successful value internalization (Astawa et al., 2025; Masdul et al., 2024; Sahid et al., 2019). Conversely, inconsistent parental involvement, limited teacher competence in religious character education, weak integration of religious values into classroom activities, and unsupportive social environments continue to present significant challenges (Istiyani, 2024; Ningrum et al., 2025; Yani, 2017). Furthermore, existing studies have predominantly focused on teachers' roles, the effectiveness of character education programs, or factors influencing the implementation of religious education. Relatively little attention has been devoted to examining how religious values are internalized through daily habituation and gradually transformed into enduring character traits among young children. This limitation highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which religious values become embedded in children's everyday lives, particularly within early childhood educational settings.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to analyze the process of religious value internalization through daily habituation in strengthening the character of young children. This study is grounded in the assumption that religious character formation is not achieved solely through the transmission of religious teachings but through a sustained process of habituation that enables children to experience, internalize, and practice religious values in their daily activities. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to conceptualize the internalization process through three interconnected dimensions, namely religious ritual habituation, socio-religious habituation, and moral habituation, which collectively contribute to the formation of religious character in early childhood. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of character education scholarship while providing practical insights for educational institutions seeking to design contextualized, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate strategies for nurturing religious character among young children.

## Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the process of religious value internalization through daily habituation in strengthening early childhood character. Qualitative inquiry was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural contexts and to capture participants' perspectives, experiences, and meanings attached to educational practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Suhirman et al., 2026; Tisdell et al., 2025). The research was conducted

at TK IT Al-Mumtaz Pontianak, an Islamic early childhood education institution that integrates religious habituation into its daily learning activities. The participants consisted of three teachers from Group B classes who were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in implementing religious habituation programs. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument responsible for planning, collecting, interpreting, and validating the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sugiyono, 2023). Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive information regarding the implementation of religious habituation practices and their role in fostering children's religious character.

Data collection was conducted over the course of the study through continuous engagement with the research setting to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the educational processes under investigation. Observations focused on daily religious activities, social interactions, and moral habituation practices implemented within the school environment, while interviews were used to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the internalization of religious values among children. Supporting documents, including learning schedules, school programs, and activity records, were analyzed to enrich and verify the findings. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data credibility was established through triangulation of sources and techniques, allowing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to be cross-checked and validated. This approach ensured that the findings accurately reflected the realities of religious value internalization within the research setting (Miles et al., 2014).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Religious Ritual Habituation as the Initial Stage of Religious Value Introduction**

The findings indicate that the internalization of religious values among young children begins through the consistent implementation of religious ritual habituation within daily school activities. Various religious practices have been systematically integrated into the learning process, including prayers before entering the classroom, prayers before and after learning activities, congregational Duha prayer, congregational Dhuhr prayer, memorization of daily supplications, memorization of short Qur'anic chapters, and introductory activities related to Arabic letters (Hijaiyah). These activities are not treated as supplementary programs but are embedded within the broader educational routine of the school. As a result, children are continuously exposed to religious practices through direct participation rather than passive observation. Through these recurring experiences, children become familiar with religious rituals from an early age, allowing them to encounter religious values in concrete and meaningful ways. The integration of religious practices into everyday learning creates an environment in which spiritual values become a natural component of children's educational experiences.

The study further revealed that the repeated implementation of religious rituals provides children with opportunities to develop familiarity and confidence in practicing religious activities. At the initial stage, many children required guidance and support from teachers when reciting prayers, performing prayer movements, or participating in memorization activities. However, continuous engagement in these practices gradually fostered greater independence and participation. Over time, children became more capable of reciting short prayers without

assistance, following prayer procedures in a more orderly manner, and remembering the sequence of religious activities that structured their daily routines. These observations suggest that ritual habituation functions not merely as a means of introducing religious practices but also as a mechanism through which children gradually develop an awareness of the significance of worship and spirituality in their daily lives.

The findings also demonstrate that religious ritual habituation serves as a foundational pathway for introducing core religious values to young children. Through daily prayer activities, children are introduced to values such as gratitude, dependence on God, and spiritual awareness. Congregational prayers provide opportunities for children to learn discipline, obedience, orderliness, and commitment to religious obligations. Meanwhile, memorization activities and the introduction of Hijaiyah letters enable children to establish an early connection with religious teachings and sacred texts. Collectively, these experiences create a learning environment rich in religious meaning, where values are not merely conveyed through verbal instruction but are experienced directly through repeated actions and routines. Consequently, religious ritual habituation functions as a crucial initial stage in the process of religious value internalization, providing children with a concrete foundation upon which deeper religious understanding and character development can gradually emerge.

### **Socio-Religious Habituation as the Value Cultivation Stage**

The findings reveal that the internalization of religious values among young children extends beyond religious ritual practices and is further developed through various forms of socio-religious habituation embedded in everyday school life. These practices include greeting and responding to greetings, shaking hands with teachers upon arrival and departure, participating in morning charity activities, making donations, and engaging in social interactions grounded in religious values. Such activities are implemented consistently and integrated into the daily routines of the school, allowing them to become an inseparable part of children's educational experiences. Rather than functioning merely as prescribed activities, these practices encourage children to actively participate in social situations that require them to demonstrate respect, generosity, and concern for others. Through continuous involvement in these experiences, children are exposed to religious values in forms that are directly connected to their social interactions.

The study further indicates that socio-religious habituation provides meaningful opportunities for children to translate religious teachings into observable social behavior. Through the routine practice of greeting others and shaking hands with teachers, children learn to establish respectful and courteous relationships with both adults and peers. Likewise, activities such as morning charity and donations offer children firsthand experiences of sharing and helping others. These experiences move beyond the simple transmission of moral concepts and enable children to practice prosocial values in authentic contexts. As these activities become part of children's daily routines, many begin to display positive behaviors more spontaneously, including initiating greetings, sharing with friends, and demonstrating greater appreciation and respect toward individuals within the school community. Such developments suggest that socio-religious habituation facilitates the practical application of religious values within children's social lives.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that socio-religious habituation serves as a critical stage in the cultivation of values by bridging the gap between religious understanding and social behavior. While religious ritual habituation introduces children to fundamental religious

principles, socio-religious habituation enables those principles to be expressed through real-life interpersonal interactions. Children gradually learn that religious teachings are not limited to personal acts of worship but also encompass the ways individuals interact with and care for others. Through repeated social experiences, values such as empathy, respect, compassion, cooperation, and social responsibility begin to emerge as habitual patterns of behavior. This finding suggests that socio-religious habituation plays a vital role in strengthening the internalization of religious values and preparing children for the development of more enduring religious character traits.

### **Moral Habituation as the Character Reinforcement Stage**

The findings indicate that the internalization of religious values among young children is further strengthened through various forms of moral habituation that are consistently implemented within the school environment. These practices are reflected in activities that encourage children to follow rules, maintain order, take responsibility for assigned tasks, and care for their learning environment. In practice, teachers continuously guide children to comply with classroom regulations, behave appropriately during activities, dispose of waste properly, organize learning materials after use, and complete learning tasks responsibly. These forms of habituation are carried out repeatedly and systematically, becoming an integral part of children's daily experiences. The findings suggest that religious character formation is not limited to worship practices and social interactions but is also reinforced through the cultivation of moral behaviors expressed in everyday actions.

The study further reveals that moral habituation provides opportunities for children to develop self-regulation and an understanding of the consequences of their actions. Throughout learning activities and religious programs, children are encouraged to maintain order, wait for their turn, listen attentively to teachers' instructions, and comply with agreed-upon rules. In addition, children are consistently guided to maintain cleanliness as part of both personal and social responsibility. As these practices continue over time, noticeable behavioral changes emerge. Children gradually become more willing to follow rules without constant reminders from teachers and demonstrate greater responsibility toward assigned tasks. They also show increased awareness of their surroundings and a stronger commitment to maintaining a positive learning environment. These observations indicate that moral habituation contributes significantly to the development of self-discipline and responsible behavior among young children.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that moral habituation represents a crucial stage in reinforcing religious character because values previously introduced through ritual and socio-religious activities become increasingly embedded in children's everyday behavior. Religious values are no longer expressed solely through acts of worship or social participation but are reflected in discipline, responsibility, care for others, and self-control across various situations. At this stage, children begin to exhibit relatively consistent patterns of positive behavior even in the absence of direct supervision from teachers. This finding suggests that the process of religious value internalization has progressed toward a deeper level of character formation, in which religious values are not only understood and practiced but have become an integral part of children's habitual ways of thinking and behaving in their daily lives.

### **A Model of Religious Value Internalization Through Daily Habituation**

Based on the overall findings, the study reveals that the internalization of religious values among young children occurs through a gradual, continuous, and interconnected process.

Rather than being achieved solely through the transmission of religious knowledge, this process develops through repeated learning experiences embedded in children's daily activities within the school environment. The findings indicate that religious ritual habituation serves as the initial stage of value introduction by exposing children to religious principles through various forms of worship and religious practices. At this stage, children begin to develop an understanding of fundamental religious concepts related to the relationship between human beings and God through daily prayers, congregational worship, memorization of short Qur'anic chapters, and other religious activities integrated into the school routine. These experiences provide an essential foundation that enables children to recognize the presence and significance of religious values in everyday life.

The second stage is characterized by the development of socio-religious habituation, which provides opportunities for children to apply the values introduced through ritual practices within real social interactions. Through routines such as greeting others, shaking hands with teachers, participating in charitable activities, making donations, and engaging in various forms of socially oriented behavior, children gradually learn that religious values extend beyond individual worship and encompass interpersonal relationships. At this stage, the meaning of religious values expands from a personal dimension to a social dimension. Children begin to associate religious teachings with behaviors that reflect respect, compassion, generosity, and social responsibility. The findings suggest that socio-religious habituation functions as a bridge connecting religious understanding with everyday social practices, allowing children to experience the practical relevance of religious values within their interactions with others.

Furthermore, the study identifies moral habituation as the reinforcement stage through which religious values evolve into relatively stable character traits. At this stage, values that were initially introduced through ritual habituation and subsequently strengthened through socio-religious experiences become increasingly reflected in children's moral behavior, including discipline, responsibility, compliance with rules, environmental awareness, and self-control. Based on these patterns, the study proposes a model of religious value internalization consisting of three interconnected stages, namely religious ritual habituation as the value introduction stage, socio-religious habituation as the value cultivation stage, and moral habituation as the character reinforcement stage. Together, these stages form a coherent developmental process that contributes to the emergence of religious character in early childhood. The findings demonstrate that religious character is shaped through the accumulation of consistent experiences within educational settings, enabling religious values not only to be understood cognitively but also to be internalized and expressed in children's daily behavior.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that the formation of religious character in early childhood is a complex developmental process that involves the gradual transformation of values from mere awareness to internalized beliefs and everyday practices. Religious character does not emerge solely from children's exposure to religious instruction; rather, it develops through a continuous accumulation of experiences that are repeatedly encountered within educational settings. The findings suggest that religious values become meaningful when children actively engage in activities that allow them to experience, practice, and reinforce those values in different contexts. In early childhood education, direct experience plays a

particularly significant role because children tend to construct their understanding of the world through concrete actions and interactions rather than through abstract conceptual explanations. Consequently, the internalization of religious values is better understood as a developmental process rooted in lived experiences rather than as an immediate outcome of religious teaching.

The findings further reveal that religious ritual habituation functions as an entry point through which children are introduced to religious values. Activities such as daily prayers, congregational worship, memorization of short Qur'anic chapters, and the introduction of Hijaiyah letters provide opportunities for children to encounter religious practices as an integral part of their daily routines. These findings are consistent with those of Hafidz (2025), Ratnasih (2025), and Novitasari (2025), who reported that routine religious activities contribute significantly to the introduction of religious values during early childhood. Similar conclusions were drawn by Al Faqh (2026), who found that religious behavior develops through repeated habituation within educational environments. The convergence of these findings suggests that repetitive religious activities serve functions that extend beyond the acquisition of worship-related skills. Consistent engagement in religious rituals allows children to develop emotional familiarity with religious practices, thereby creating opportunities for religious values to become embedded within their everyday experiences.

However, the findings also demonstrate that ritual practices alone are insufficient to explain the emergence of religious character in a comprehensive manner. Values introduced through religious rituals require opportunities for application within social contexts so that they can acquire deeper personal and social meaning. In the present study, this process was reflected in socio-religious activities such as greeting others, shaking hands, sharing resources, donating, and participating in charitable practices. These activities enabled children to connect religious teachings with real-life social experiences. The findings support previous studies conducted by Hafidz (2025), Nasution and Ismaraidha (2025), and Ratnasih (2025), which demonstrated that social interactions grounded in religious values contribute to the development of respect, empathy, compassion, and social responsibility among young children. This suggests that religious values gradually move beyond the personal sphere and become integrated into children's social behavior. As a result, children begin to understand that religious teachings are not only expressed through acts of worship but also through the ways they interact with and respond to others.

This interpretation helps explain why some previous studies have reported different conclusions regarding the effectiveness of religious habituation in fostering character development. Istiyani (2024) argued that repetitive ritual activities do not necessarily lead to deep value internalization when children merely follow procedures without understanding their underlying meanings. A similar perspective was proposed by Al-Razi (2025), who suggested that participation in religious rituals does not automatically result in consistent moral behavior. Likewise, Agustina (2025) found that moral development requires not only repeated behavioral practice but also emotional engagement and an understanding of the moral reasoning underlying particular actions. The findings of the present study provide a complementary perspective to these arguments. Religious value internalization appears not to be the product of ritual activities alone but rather the result of a broader developmental process involving socio-religious experiences and moral habituation. Consequently, the effectiveness of religious rituals should be understood within a larger framework that allows religious values to be practiced, experienced, and translated into meaningful forms of behavior.

The mechanisms underlying these findings can be explained through the process of habituation. Trisnantari (2026) argued that repeated exposure to particular values enables individuals to gradually transform externally guided actions into personally meaningful habits. This mechanism was evident in the present study, where children who initially required substantial teacher guidance in praying, participating in congregational worship, and engaging in religious activities gradually became capable of performing these practices independently. This interpretation is reinforced by the findings of Ernawati and Ismail (2026), who demonstrated that consistently repeated activities contribute to the development of increasingly automatic behavioral patterns, thereby reducing dependence on external supervision. From this perspective, habituation should not be viewed merely as repetitive practice; rather, it functions as a process through which individuals develop psychological attachment to the values embedded within their actions.

In addition to habituation, the findings can also be understood through the lens of social learning. Mujtaba and Ragil (2026) explained that religious character develops through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within everyday social interactions. In the context of this study, teachers functioned not only as instructors but also as behavioral models whose actions were observed and imitated by children. Activities such as greeting, shaking hands, sharing, and participating in charitable practices created opportunities for children to enact values that had previously been introduced through ritual activities. This interpretation is supported by Aprianti et al. (2026), who found that social and religious values develop more effectively when children are given opportunities to practice them directly rather than merely receiving verbal explanations. Accordingly, socio-religious habituation can be understood as a bridge connecting children's understanding of religious values with their practical application in everyday social situations.

The internalization process reaches a deeper level when repeatedly practiced values become integrated into children's self-regulatory systems. In the present study, this process was reflected in the emergence of discipline, responsibility, rule compliance, environmental awareness, and the ability to regulate behavior without constant teacher supervision. These findings suggest that religious character is not simply the product of obedience to external rules but rather the outcome of values that have become embedded within children's ways of thinking and acting. This interpretation aligns with Dwistia and Mutiara (2026), who argued that value internalization occurs when repeatedly practiced behaviors become part of an individual's self-regulation system. Similar conclusions were reached by Safitri (2021) and Nasution and Ismaraidha (2025), who demonstrated that consistent habituation contributes significantly to the development of self-regulation, enabling children to manage their behavior independently. Therefore, the religious character observed in this study reflects a deeper process in which religious values evolve from external expectations into internally guided behavioral dispositions.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on religious value internalization in early childhood by demonstrating that the process unfolds through interconnected stages that serve distinct developmental functions. Previous studies have generally described habituation as a broad mechanism for fostering religious character without explaining how value internalization evolves over time. The findings of this study suggest that religious ritual habituation functions as a stage of value introduction, socio-religious habituation serves as a stage of value cultivation, and moral habituation operates as a stage of character reinforcement. This framework extends the models proposed by Nursobah (2025), Firdaus

(2025), and Trisnantari (2026) by offering a more detailed explanation of how religious values develop from ritual experiences into relatively stable character traits. Furthermore, the findings broaden the concept of the hidden curriculum discussed by Dwistia and Mutiara (2026) by demonstrating that religious value internalization occurs not only through teacher role modeling but also through a structured and progressive system of habituation embedded within school life.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that strengthening religious character in early childhood requires a more comprehensive approach than merely increasing the frequency of religious activities. Educational institutions should integrate ritual experiences, socio-religious interactions, and moral habituation into the broader educational process so that introduced values can gradually develop into enduring behavioral patterns. This conclusion is consistent with Shaliadi (2025), who emphasized the importance of integrating school culture, habituation practices, and character education in promoting children's religiosity. The three-stage model proposed in this study may serve as a framework for developing habituation-based educational programs that begin with value introduction through ritual practices, continue with value application through social interaction, and culminate in character reinforcement through sustained moral habituation. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, particularly because it was conducted within a single educational institution characterized by a relatively homogeneous environment. Future research should therefore examine the applicability of this model across diverse social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Furthermore, as highlighted by Saputri (2026), Sriyanto (2026), and Sumar (2025), the effectiveness of religious value internalization is likely to be enhanced through strong collaboration among schools, families, and wider social environments, ensuring that character formation is reinforced consistently across multiple contexts of children's lives.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the internalization of religious values in early childhood is a gradual, continuous, and interconnected process that develops through structured daily habituation. The findings reveal that religious ritual habituation serves as the value introduction stage by familiarizing children with fundamental religious practices and meanings, socio-religious habituation functions as the value cultivation stage by providing opportunities to enact religious values through social interactions, and moral habituation operates as the character reinforcement stage through which religious values evolve into relatively stable patterns of behavior. These findings demonstrate that religious character formation does not emerge instantaneously through the transmission of religious knowledge alone but develops through the accumulation of experiences that enable children to recognize, practice, internalize, and express religious values in their daily lives. Accordingly, this study proposes a model of religious value internalization that explains the sequential relationship between religious ritual habituation, socio-religious habituation, and moral habituation in the formation of religious character among young children.

The findings offer important theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on religious value internalization by demonstrating that habituation functions not as a single mechanism but as a developmental process consisting of distinct yet interconnected stages that support character formation. From a practical perspective, the proposed model may serve as a framework for designing religious character education programs in early childhood settings by integrating ritual experiences,

socio-religious interactions, and moral habituation into the broader culture of the school. Nevertheless, this study was conducted within a single educational institution and therefore reflects a relatively limited context. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the diversity of religious value internalization practices across different educational environments. Future research is encouraged to examine the applicability of this model in diverse social, cultural, and institutional contexts, while also exploring the roles of families and community environments in strengthening the internalization of religious values during early childhood.

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