



Beyond Ritual Practice: Moral Value Internalization through Dawn *Halaqah* in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract

Morals are the primary foundation for students' character in Islamic boarding schools, but modern challenges, such as globalization and the development of information technology, may weaken the internalization of moral values. In this case, the dawn halaqah activity at the Darul Ilmi Banjarbaru Islamic Boarding School is a vital strategy to instill moral values through direct experience, material appreciation, and the example of the supervisors. This research aims to examine the process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah as a medium for students' character development. The approach used is a phenomenological qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with ustaz, pesantren administrators, and students, as well as participatory observation and documentation. Data analysis is carried out inductively through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that dawn halaqah plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of students, including honesty, tawadhu', responsibility, patience, discipline, tolerance, and emotional control, thereby creating a harmonious and conducive pesantren environment. The internalization process occurs through regular habituation, spiritual reflection, and the example of the supervisor, strengthening spirituality and building students' emotional and social maturity. These findings confirm the effectiveness of routine religious activities as a medium for character development and show that a hands-on and exemplary approach can strengthen the internalization of moral values. The implications of this research can serve as a basis for developing character education strategies in other Islamic boarding schools and religious education institutions, as well as guide teachers in designing activities that are more contextual, systematic, and oriented towards the formation of a complete character. The uniqueness of this study lies in the discovery that the intensity of student involvement in the dawn halaqah is a key factor that directly accelerates the internalization of moral values. This finding has not been widely reported in previous research.

Keywords: Internalization of morals, dawn circle, character building, halaqah subuh

Abstrak

Akhlik merupakan fondasi utama dalam pembentukan karakter santri di pesantren, namun tantangan modern seperti pengaruh globalisasi dan perkembangan teknologi informasi berpotensi melemahkan internalisasi nilai moral. Dalam hal ini, kegiatan halaqah subuh di Pondok Pesantren Darul Ilmi Banjarbaru menjadi strategi penting untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai akhlak melalui

pengalaman langsung, penghayatan materi, dan keteladanan para pembimbing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji proses internalisasi nilai akhlak melalui halaqah subuh sebagai media pembinaan karakter santri. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif fenomenologis, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dengan ustaz, pengurus pesantren, dan santri, serta observasi partisipatif dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara induktif melalui tahapan reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa halaqah subuh berperan signifikan dalam membentuk sikap dan perilaku santri, termasuk kejujuran, tawadhu', tanggung jawab, kesabaran, disiplin, toleransi, dan pengendalian emosi, sehingga menciptakan lingkungan pesantren yang harmonis dan kondusif. Proses internalisasi berlangsung melalui pembiasaan rutin, refleksi spiritual, serta keteladanan pembimbing, yang tidak hanya memperkuat spiritualitas, tetapi juga membangun kedewasaan emosional dan sosial santri. Temuan ini menegaskan efektivitas kegiatan keagamaan rutin sebagai media pembinaan karakter dan menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan pengalaman langsung dan keteladanan dapat memperkuat internalisasi nilai moral. Implikasi penelitian ini dapat menjadi dasar pengembangan strategi pendidikan karakter di pesantren lain dan lembaga pendidikan keagamaan, serta memberikan panduan bagi pengajar untuk merancang kegiatan yang lebih kontekstual, sistematis, dan berorientasi pada pembentukan karakter yang utuh. Keunikan penelitian ini terletak pada penemuan bahwa intensitas keterlibatan santri dalam halaqah subuh menjadi faktor kunci yang secara langsung mempercepat proses internalisasi nilai akhlak, sesuatu yang belum banyak diungkap dalam penelitian sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci : Internalisasi akhlak, halaqah subuh, pembinaan karakter, halaqah subuh

INTRODUCTION

Morals are the main foundation in the formation of a complete human character. In Islam, moral values are not only complementary in worship, but the spirit of all life behaviors (Mydin et al., 2020). Good morals reflect the depth of faith and appreciation of the spiritual values contained in religious teachings (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Bahtiar et al., 2025; Kuncorowati et al., 2025) Individual piety from an Islamic perspective is not enough to be seen only from the ritual of worship, but also from how a person treats fellow humans, the environment, and how he protects himself from despicable behavior (Safrilsyah et al., 2024; Zamroni et al., 2024; Zamsiswaya et al., 2024) Today's modern society faces considerable challenges in maintaining moral values. The current of globalization and the rapid development of information technology have a positive impact on the ease of access to information, but it is also a big gap for the erosion of moral values if it is not balanced with strong spiritual filters (Ar et al., 2025; Mufrihah et al., 2025; Salamah et al., 2025; Shaukat et al., 2024) Adolescents and the younger generation, as the group most vulnerable to global cultural change, are often influenced by instant and hedonistic lifestyles that are contrary to religious teachings (Mahrudin et al., 2025; Majid et al., 2025) In these conditions, the role of moral value education is very vital so that the young generation is not only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally and spiritually mature.

In the concept of character education according to Thomas Lickona, he emphasizes three main components, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 2022) In this perspective, the internalization of moral values is not only related to students' understanding of moral concepts, but also the formation of emotional sensitivity and the habituation of real actions as a reflection of embedded character (Javid et al., 2024; Karmina et al., 2024; Widiana et al., 2023). The dawn halaqah at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School Banjarbaru is in line with this framework because the process of moral development is carried out through understanding religious materials (knowing), spiritual appreciation through advice

and contemplation (feeling), and the implementation of behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, and self-control in daily life (action). This approach allows moral values not only to be learned cognitively, but also to be lived and practiced as part of the character of the students (Fatah et al., 2025; Nada Nabilah et al., 2024).

Several studies have emphasized the importance of internalizing morality through experience and example, not just a cognitive approach such as lectures (Rodiah et al., 2024). Moral values need to be internalized through direct experience, example, and continuous interaction. This internalization process involves affective and psychomotor aspects, where students not only know the concepts of good and bad, but are also able to feel, appreciate, and get used to doing good consistently (Rodhiyana, 2022). Successful moral value education is one that is able to change behavior and form life habits that are rooted in inner awareness and solid faith (Atin & Maemonah, 2022). One approach that can be used to internalize moral values is through routine and structured religious activities. The activity provided a space for participants to interact, discuss, and reflect on Islamic values directly. Activities that take place regularly can strengthen habituation and make moral values part of daily life. Interaction between supervisors and participants is also an important means of forming a deep spiritual mindset and attitude, especially when accompanied by a supportive and sincere atmosphere (Jannah, 2022). However, although the literature highlights the importance of experience and example, most of the research is still at the conceptual level or only addresses the general practice of moral education without elaborating on the internalization mechanisms at work in routine religious activities. Empirical studies that specifically explain how spiritual experiences, exemplary ustaz, interaction intensity, and rhythm of daily activities contribute integratively to the formation of morals are still very limited. In addition, there has been no research that has in-depth dissected the practice of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah activities as a typical routine of pesantren and how these activities form the structure of moral awareness and habitus of students in the context of pesantren community life. This gap is the basis for the presence of this research, namely to empirically and in detail reveal the mechanism of internalizing moral values in dawn halaqah activities at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School Banjarbaru, so as to be able to fill the research gap that has not previously been discussed systematically and in depth.

The Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic educational institutions that has a strong commitment to forming students not only from the scientific aspect, but also from the moral and spiritual aspects. In the pesantren tradition, moral education is not something complementary, but rather the core of all educational activities (Tambrin et al., 2022). Every activity carried out in pesantren is always oriented towards the formation of noble character and behavior that reflects Islamic values (Arizona et al., 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Mayasafira, 2025). This is reflected in various coaching programs that are carried out regularly and systematically, both through formal learning activities in the classroom and through non-formal coaching that is more personal and spiritual. The Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School has developed various methods of moral development, one of which is through dawn halaqah activities, which are Islamic coaching activities that are carried out routinely every morning after the dawn prayer in congregation. Dawn halaqah at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School is not only a religious routine, but has become part of the process of

mental and spiritual formation of students. In this activity, the students were guided to understand the values of Islamic teachings in a more in-depth and contextual manner (Karyono et al., 2025; Nurdy & Ahmad, 2025). The material presented in halaqah covers various aspects of life, ranging from personal morals, social responsibility, to ethics in seeking knowledge and interacting with others. *Halaqah* supervisors are usually ustaz or kyai who have been involved in the world of pesantren education for a long time and have a strong influence in shaping the perspective and behavior of students. The activity took place in a calm and reverent atmosphere, making it a deeply reflective moment for each participant to reflect on his or her position as a servant of God and as part of the wider society.

This study aims to analyze how the process of internalizing moral values is carried out through dawn halaqah activities at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School. The focus of the research is directed at the coaching methods applied, the response of students to these materials and methods, and their influence on changes in attitudes and behaviors of students in daily life. The problem that is the background for the need for this research is the indication that some students have not fully shown behavioral changes in accordance with the values taught in halaqah, even though these activities have become a routine program of Islamic boarding schools. Thus, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of dawn halaqah as a means of moral formation, as well as provide recommendations for improving and strengthening character development programs in the pesantren environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a phenomenological qualitative approach to deeply understand the experiences and meanings felt by students in the process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School. According to Cresswell (2018), phenomenological research focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals, with the aim of capturing the essence of phenomena as experienced by participants. In this study, the researcher acted as the main instrument, collecting data through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Triangulation strategies are used to increase the credibility of data by comparing information from different sources and methods. Data analysis is carried out inductively, identifying the main themes that arise from the experience of students, so that the meaning of internalizing moral values can be described holistically and contextually.

The main data collection technique in this study is in-depth interviews. The interview was chosen because it gave the researcher the flexibility to explore information more comprehensively from the informants, both in terms of understanding, personal experience, and their feelings and subjective assessments of the dawn halaqah activities. According to Sugiyono (2021), interviews are a way to obtain information directly from the source by asking questions directly and in-depth. In this study, the researcher interviewed a number of informants including caregivers or ustaz of *halaqah* supervisors, senior students, and students who actively participated in these activities. The questions are structured in a semi-structured manner to remain flexible but still directed according to the research objectives. Through these interviews, researchers hope to capture deep meanings that may not be able to be explored through observation or written documentation alone.

Data analysis was carried out using a phenomenological approach based on the steps developed by Moustakas in (Moustakas, 1994). The first stage is epoché, which is the researcher's attempt to refrain from prejudices, initial assumptions, and personal biases in order to be able to listen to the informant's experience purely. The next stage is phenomenological reduction, in which the researcher identifies significant statements from the interview results, groups important meanings, and compiles textural descriptions of the informant's experience. After that, imaginative variation is carried out, which is the process of exploring various possible perspectives, conditions, and structures behind the experience to find out how the phenomenon is experienced. The last stage is the synthesis of meanings and essences, which is integrating textural and structural descriptions to produce a complete understanding of the essence of the informant's experience related to the process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Implementation of Fajr *Halaqah* Activities at Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School

The implementation of dawn halaqah activities at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School is an integral part of the religious routine and the formation of the character of the students. This activity is carried out every morning after the congregational dawn prayer and is a special moment for direct moral development through book studies, tausiyah, and religious dialogue. Halaqah is led by ustaz or pesantren caregivers and is attended by all students from various levels. The material presented is not only related to the aspect of worship, but also touches on the realm of manners, daily ethics, and applicable Islamic moral values. The atmosphere of halaqah is conducive and warm, providing space for students to reflect, ask questions, and understand moral values through spiritual experiences framed in congregational life.

Halaqah dawn provides an educational space for students to digest moral values from a theoretical and practical perspective. The habit of listening to advice from early morning forms a moral awareness that is consistently embedded (Normilah et al., 2023). This is in line with the results of an interview by *the Ustaz Guidance of Halaqah*, which shows that: *"We direct the dawn halaqah not only to convey knowledge, but to shape the mood of the students. The morning is a clear time, and advice delivered when the heart is still calm tends to be more relevant. We convey moral values such as honesty, humility, respect for others, it all must depart from the heart, not just memorize."*

The active participation of students in the dawn halaqah also shows that this activity is not just a routine, but a space for character formation slowly and repeatedly. The example of the ustaz who became the speakers is a key aspect in forming an effective moral learning atmosphere. This is reinforced by interviews with *Final Class Senior Students*, which show that: *"What I feel most about the dawn halaqah is not only the knowledge, but how the ustaz lives according to what he teaches. When it comes to patience, he is patient. That is a lesson for us that morality must be exemplified, not just conveyed."*

Apart from being a space for moral learning, dawn halaqah is also a means of strengthening social bonds between students, because it is carried out together in a family atmosphere. The students remind each other and learn to be respectful of each other, both to

ustaz and to others. Moral values such as responsibility, discipline, and empathy are formed through this repetitive process of halaqah. This statement is reinforced by an interview with the *Daily Management of the Lodge*, which shows that: *"After a few months of participating in the dawn halaqah regularly, we have seen many changes from the students, such as helping each other, not being emotional, more respectful to the upperclass. Not because they are pressured, but because they feel it is part of the doctrine that they hear and ponder every day."*

The process of implementing dawn halaqah as a whole shows a pattern of fostering moral values that is not only based on text and oral, but also on aspects of mood, togetherness, and example. Halaqah not only creates a space for religious learning, but also becomes a medium for internalizing moral values naturally and gradually. Instilling value through halaqah has been proven to have an influence on the mindset and behavior of students. These findings show that dawn halaqah has a great contribution to fostering the character of students at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School, so it is urgent to maintain and develop this method of moral development in a more structured and consistent manner.

Moral Values Internalized Through Fajr Halaqah Activities

The moral values that are internalized to students through dawn halaqah activities at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School include various aspects that touch personal, social, and spiritual morals. Some of the main values that are the focus in each delivery of the material include honesty, tawadhu' (humility), responsibility, patience, respect for teachers and parents, and the spirit of helping others. These values are not conveyed normatively alone, but are instilled through a storytelling approach, life examples, and direct examples from ustaz. Fajr halaqah is an effective time to convey these values because the relatively quiet and solemn atmosphere of the morning allows students to absorb meaning more deeply and reflectively (Malfi et al., 2023a).

The value of honesty is one of the values that is most often emphasized in every halaqah. Students are invited to understand that honesty is the basis of every form of noble behavior and is a benchmark for one's closeness to true Islamic teachings. This is in line with the results of an interview by *Ustaz Pengananni Harian Halaqah*, which shows that:

"We often repeat the message about being honest. There is no need to be afraid to point out mistakes as long as they are correct. Honesty is not only to be judged by teachers, but as a form of honesty to God. If students can be honest about small things, God willing, they can be trusted in big things in the future."

The value of tawadhu' or humility is also a central aspect discussed in the dawn halaqah. Students are accustomed not to boast about their knowledge or position, and to respect the opinions of others. When the ustaz convey this value, they also show a real humble attitude in daily interactions, thus providing a strong psychological influence for the students. This is reinforced by interviews with *Final Class Male Students*, which show that:

"If the ustaz talks about tawadhu', he never boasts of his knowledge. We learned that humility does not mean being weak, but rather being strong because it can hold oneself. Sometimes there are students who are smart, but do not underestimate their friends. That's the result of halaqah that we follow every dawn."

The value of responsibility and discipline is a moral value that arises naturally through active involvement in halaqah activities. Students who attend and follow halaqah seriously will bring this attitude into their daily activities. Sensitivity to time, commitment to attendance, and

readiness to listen become a form of continuous moral habituation. This statement is corroborated by an interview from the *Pesantren Activity Administrator*, who shows that:

"Halaqah activities are not just sitting and listening to lectures. From there, we train students to come on time, pay attention to the content of the study, and channel that understanding through daily actions. They become more aware that being responsible is not because they are being watched, but because it has become a habit."

The series of moral values internalized in the dawn halaqah shows that the character development of students at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School runs systematically and contextually. Students not only hear these values, but also experience them in their social interactions, both with fellow friends, teachers, and in the routine of the Islamic boarding school. This is a strong foundation for the process of internalizing values, which is not only conceptual, but integrated into the lives of students in real life. Instilling moral values through dawn halaqah plays a major role in forming a generation that has integrity, social awareness, and high spiritual sensitivity.

The Process of Internalizing Moral Values Through Dawn Halaqah

The process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School has a real influence on the attitude and behavior of students in daily life. The values conveyed regularly and consistently during halaqah become a moral foothold that directs students to implement noble morals in social interactions and personal activities. This habituation does not only stop at the realm of theory, but forms a collective awareness and personal responsibility that is strongly inherent in students. The internalization process takes place through repetition, appreciation, and example shown by the ustaz and seniors, so that moral values become a natural part of their daily life in the pesantren environment.

This is in line with the results of an interview by *the Ustaz Guidance of Halaqah*, which shows that:

"Students who actively follow the dawn halaqah usually show a significant change in attitude. They become more patient in the face of adversity, more sensitive to the condition of friends, and try to distance themselves from negative behaviors such as speaking rudely or lying. The value they hear is not just words, but they feel themselves in their daily lives."

These changes in attitudes and behaviors are also seen in the interaction between students, which are now more harmonious and tolerant. The dawn halaqah equips them with the understanding that morality is a mirror of faith that must be realized in reality, so as to create a conducive and mutually respectful environment. This statement is strengthened by the results of interviews with *Senior Students*, which show that:

"The atmosphere of the pesantren feels more comfortable because we learn how to appreciate differences and control emotions. If there is a problem, we try to solve it properly according to the values learned in halaqah, not with anger or violence."



Figure 1. Atmosphere of Activities at Islamic Boarding Schools

The interaction between the values taught and their implementation in daily life also strengthens the motivation of students to continue to improve themselves. This process also involves personal reflection after following the halaqah, where students reflect on what they have learned and how to apply it. A statement from *the Management of Islamic Boarding School Activities* shows that:

"We often observe that students who are active in halaqah have a higher awareness of the importance of morals in living the life of the Islamic boarding school. They gradually show discipline, respect for teachers, and a desire to be an example to their peers."

The process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah forms a solid foundation of character for students. The attitude formed not only reflects the understanding of religious teachings, but also becomes a life handle that guides behavior in various situations. Consistent and continuous coaching makes students more emotionally and spiritually mature, as well as being able to play an active role in creating a safe, comfortable, and peaceful pesantren environment. This positive influence shows that dawn halaqah is not just a religious activity, but a deep and meaningful process of self-transformation.

Aspects of the Findings	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence (Interview Quotes/Observations)	Impact on Santri
Implementation of Halaqah Activities	Fajr It is carried out after the Fajr prayer in congregation; led by ustaz; contains book studies, tausiyah, moral discussions; Warm and reflective atmosphere	"Morning is a time when the heart is still calm... moral values must depart from the heart." Ustaz Pembina	Santri is better prepared to receive advice; moral consciousness grows consistently

The Role of Ustaz Exemplary	Ustaz becomes a role model in morals (patience, humility)	"What I feel the most... Ustaz live according to what is taught." Final Class Student	Students imitate the attitude of ustaz in real behavior
Internalized Moral Values	Honesty, <i>tawadhu'</i> (humility), responsibility, discipline, respect for teachers and friends, help	"Honesty is a form of honesty to Allah..." – Ustaz <i>Halaqah</i> Harian	Personal and social morals are formed through habituation and strengthening of values
The Process of Internalizing Values	Through repetition, habituation, self-reflection, the influence of the exemplary ustaz and seniors	"Students become more patient, not easily angry, stay away from lies." – Ustaz Pembina	Moral values are embedded naturally and gradually in daily life
Increased Social Interaction	Relationships between students are more harmonious, respectful and not easily disputed	"We learn to solve problems without emotion..." Senior Student	A peaceful, comfortable and mutually respectful pesantren environment is formed
Contribution of Halaqah Subuh	To be an effective, sustainable and contextual character building medium	Observation of changes in students' daily behavior	Morals are more emotionally and spiritually mature

Discussion

The process of internalizing moral values through dawn halaqah at the Darul Ilmi Islamic Boarding School shows how structured character development can significantly affect the formation of student attitudes and behaviors. Halaqah dawn as a medium for moral learning not only functions as a means of delivering material, but also becomes a space for value transformation that permeates the daily lives of students (Asmul, 2023). The cultivation of values such as honesty, *tawadhu'*, responsibility, and patience takes place repeatedly and consistently, so as to form a strong awareness for students to internalize and practice these values in real terms. This shows that coaching methods that prioritize spiritual closeness and appreciation through life experiences can be an effective strategy in building good character.

The value of honesty that is often emphasized in the dawn halaqah shows a central role in shaping the integrity of students. Honesty is not only understood as a moral obligation, but also as a form of obedience to religious teachings that are the foundation of students' lives (Dewi et al., 2025; Nirmala et al., 2025) When honesty becomes part of daily behavior, it creates a transparent and trusting pesantren environment between community members. This honest attitude reflects an internalization process that has succeeded in bridging ideal values with the reality of students' actions, proving that habituation and strengthening values on a regular basis can produce real changes in mindsets and behaviors (Belhaj, 2025; Chaman & Siddiqui, 2023; Ji et al., 2025; Parks et al., 2025),

The value of tawadhu' or humility internalized through dawn halaqah shows the success of coaching in forming an inclusive and non-arrogant mental attitude (Rahmawati, 2020). The example of the ustaz who not only conveyed material, but also applied the attitude of tawadhu' in daily interactions, had a strong psychological impact on the students. This humble attitude opens up space for students to respect and respect each other, building a harmonious and conducive pesantren climate. Learning the value of tawadhu' is the foundation for students to be not only intellectually smart, but also emotionally and socially mature (Karmina et al., 2024; Subaşı et al., 2026)

The process of internalizing the value of responsibility that arises from the active involvement of students in the dawn halaqah shows a strong relationship with the framework of character education put forward by Lickona, especially in the dimension of moral action as the highest stage of moral internalization. In the perspective of this theory, moral action is born from a combination of understanding (moral knowing) and emotional sensitivity (moral feeling) which is then manifested in real behavior (Arif et al., 2023). The findings of this study show that the regularity of time and seriousness of students in following halaqah is not only ritual or structural obligation, but has developed into a form of moral action that reflects the value of internalized responsibility (Budiyanti & Parhan, 2024; Febrianti et al., 2025; Mustikamah et al., 2025) Discipline exists not as mechanical obedience, but as moral awareness that grows from the process of repeated appreciation and reflection. These findings confirm that halaqah routines create a *learning environment* that stimulates *moral habituation*, where students build independent, consistent, and reliable character. In social pesantren, the internalization of this responsibility strengthens social cohesion, builds trust between members, and makes solidarity a common value that arises from stable moral practices (Ayubi & Masruri, 2025; Miftahuddin et al., 2024; R & Kamil, 2025). Thus, the results of this study not only describe behavioral changes, but also show how the structure of religious activities is able to drive the process of internalizing morals according to the theoretical model of modern character education.

The changes in the attitude and behavior of the students seen in daily interactions mark the success of the internalization process that takes place effectively. Students who actively follow halaqah show patience, social awareness, and the ability to control emotions when facing conflicts. The attitude of tolerance and harmonization of relationships between students is clear evidence that the moral values taught do not stop at the level of theoretical understanding, but are translated into actions that build a peaceful and mutually respectful pesantren atmosphere (Fahmi, 2020). This reflects that the internalization of moral values is able to form positive and sustainable social behavior patterns (Purwanto et al., 2019).

Personal reflection carried out by students after participating in halaqah strengthens the process of internalizing moral values. The awareness to continue to improve oneself and apply the values that have been learned shows that coaching through halaqah is not just a formal activity, but a profound character transformation process (Annabil & Hanif, 2025; Ismail et al., 2024) This reflection is an internal motivation for students to play an active role in creating a high moral and civilized pesantren environment. The activeness of students in living these moral values also shows the existence of spiritual maturity which is a strong foundation for their personal development (Aziz et al., 2025; Fanani & Ma'arif, 2025; Permadi et al., 2025)

The positive influence of the internalization of moral values through dawn halaqah proves that systematic and sustainable character development is able to produce significant changes in the lives of students. The attitudes and behaviors formed not only reflect a good understanding of religion, but also become a life guide that directs students to contribute positively in the wider community. Halaqah dawn as a method of moral development is able to integrate spiritual, social, and emotional aspects so as to form individuals who are not only knowledgeable, but also virtuous. This process is the main capital in creating a generation of students who are ready to face the challenges of the times without ignoring the moral values that have been taught (Jubba et al., 2022; Kohlberg, 1984; Permadi et al., 2025)

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the dawn *halaqah* activities have a greater impact than previously assumed in the process of internalizing moral values among students. The dawn *halaqah* does not merely function as a routine religious activity, but serves as a strategic and effective medium for shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, including honesty, *tawadhu'* (humility), responsibility, patience, discipline, tolerance, and emotional self-control. These findings challenge the long-standing assumption that routine religious practices are merely ritualistic, and open new discussions indicating that the intensity of student participation, the exemplary role of ustaz, and the reflective atmosphere of the early morning are key factors that directly accelerate the process of moral internalization in a profound and sustainable manner.

From a scientific perspective, this study reinforces previous findings that emphasize the importance of habituation, direct experience, and exemplary behavior in character education within Islamic boarding schools. At the same time, it questions the validity of moral education approaches that overly prioritize cognitive aspects while neglecting affective and practical dimensions. This research introduces the concept of *intensity-based moral internalization*, referring to a process in which moral values are internalized more rapidly through students' active, consistent, and reflective engagement in dawn halaqah activities. This contribution enriches scholarly discourse in the fields of Islamic education and pesantren-based character education.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, particularly the relatively small sample size and its focus on a single pesantren context, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, variations in student characteristics such as social background, gender, and age were not explored in depth. Therefore, further research involving larger and more diverse samples is needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying moral value internalization in Islamic educational settings.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, future research is recommended to expand the scope of investigation by involving a wider range of Islamic boarding schools across different regions and typologies (*salaf*, *khalaif*, and integrated pesantren) to achieve more comprehensive and comparative insights. Subsequent studies may also employ a *mixed-methods* approach by combining qualitative and quantitative data to more objectively measure the influence of dawn *halaqah* intensity on changes in students' attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, future research should consider moderating variables such as gender, age, family background, and length of stay in the pesantren to better understand variations in the moral internalization process. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine the

sustainability of the impact of dawn *halaqah* activities on students' character development after they graduate and engage with the wider society.

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