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## The effectiveness of religious character building for Karangdukuh Elementary School students by making them habit of reading Asmaul Husna

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of developing the religious character of students at Karangdukuh Elementary School through the habitual recitation of the Asmaul Husna (The Beautiful Names of Allah). Asmaul Husna is a phrase containing good and noble qualities. The recitation of Asmaul Husna is performed every morning before the start of teaching and learning activities in the school. This activity aims to instill the good qualities of Asmaul Husna in students' personalities. This program of habitual daily recitation of Asmaul Husna is expected to foster good qualities in students, as embodied in the content of the Asmaul Husna. This study used a qualitative approach and ethnographic methods. There were three respondents in this study. Data collection was conducted through observation and interviews. This study shows that the habitual recitation of Asmaul Husna before teaching and learning activities can improve students' religious character. This improvement in religious character is evident in students' habits of being more polite, respectful of teachers, diligent in prayer, loving, and maintaining cleanliness.

**Keywords:** Asmaul Husna; elementary school students; religious character

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying, student brawls, and violence are commonplace in today's education system. This demonstrates the weak character of today's students. Good national character must be developed and nurtured as early as possible so that society can instill good traits and behaviors from an early age, thereby reducing crime rates (Lestari & Handayani, 2023).

The purpose of the education system, as stipulated in Article 2 of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2002, is to develop the potential of students to become individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional No. 20 of 2002).

Schools should be places for moral development, but the reality is that students' morals are currently concerning. This is evident in the large number of children who join gangs, are uncommunicative with their parents, and are impolite and disrespectful to their teachers. These numerous social cases indicate a decline in children's morals and attitudes (Ruliyanto, 2019). Moral degradation and deviant behavior in the millennial era can spread rapidly (Hendrini, 2018). The current phenomenon of declining morals and ethics among students in schools is a social phenomenon in the world of education that needs to be addressed.

The Indonesian government has introduced a program called the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) program. The PPK is an effort to cultivate character education in schools. The PPK program will be implemented in stages according to needs. The PPK program aims to promote quality and moral education nationwide. Presidential Regulation No. 87, Article 2 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education (PPK) aims to: 1) Develop and equip students as Indonesia's golden generation in 2045 with the spirit of Pancasila and sound character education to face the dynamics of future change; 2) Develop a national education platform that places character education at the core of education for students, supported by public involvement through formal, non-formal, and informal education channels, considering Indonesia's cultural diversity; 3) Revitalizing and strengthening the potential and competency of educators, education personnel, students, the community, and the family environment in implementing PPK (Lestari & Handayani, 2023).

The goals of character education, as envisioned by the Ministry of National Education (2010:7) are: 1) Develop the potential of the heart, conscience, and affective abilities of students as human beings and citizens who possess the nation's cultural values and character; 2) Form habits and actions that are commendable and aligned with the nation's cultural norms and religious traditions; 3) Instill a spirit of leadership and a sense of responsibility as part of the next generation of nation-building; 4) Developing independent and innovative personal abilities is also important; 5) Cultivating a positive school environment (Utami et al., 2024).

In addition, the goals of national culture and character education include: 1) Developing Quality Students: encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, grounded in the values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and Indonesian culture; 2) Mastering Science and Technology so that students are able to understand and respond to the needs of society for the welfare of the nation and state; 3) Developing Quality Leaders: attitudes, behaviors, and actions that make students future leaders of the nation with quality, integrity, and culture; 4) Preparing Life Skills so that students have a balance of intellectual, emotional, and physical abilities to meet the needs of life; 5) Enhancing Nationalism so that students can appreciate their own civilization and culture; 6) Developing Adaptability so that students can adapt to developments in science and technology in the global era; 7) Preparing mental and physical readiness so that students are ready to face the changes and challenges of an ever-evolving era; 8) Building loyalty and morality so that students have loyalty to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, high morality, and sensitivity to socio-cultural issues (Utami et al., 2024).

Ahmad Tafsir emphasized the importance of early character education. Children who do not develop religious morals during childhood will later become relatively difficult to educate in religious morality as adults. In line with this statement, Hurlock stated that juvenile delinquency is not a new

phenomenon of adolescence but rather a continuation of associative behavioral patterns that began in childhood (Suyadi, 2012).

Character education for elementary school students is crucial because students at this age are in the concrete operational cognitive development stage. According to cognitive development theory, at this stage, students begin to view the world objectively and think operationally, enabling them to classify the various things around them. This enables teachers to provide education that can shape students' personalities and character. With proper guidance, students are expected to develop a broad understanding of moral and social values, which serve as the foundation for character formation (Fitriyani et al., 2024).

Character education can be further implemented through the establishment of a school culture. Students learn from their immediate environment, including the school environment. All parties involved in the school must be able to create an environment that fosters positive character in students. Creating a school culture is the responsibility of all teachers and other parties involved in the school environment. For example, a school culture involves instilling the habit of performing the Dhuha or Dzuhur prayer, with the active participation of teachers, school staff, and students. Furthermore, when schools commemorate religious holidays, teachers and school officials do not simply hold activities as a formality; rather, they raise students' awareness of the meaning of these activities (Utami et al., 2024).

Religious character education in schools focuses on the formation of a religious culture, namely the habits that underlie behavioral education, daily habits, and activities implemented by all elements of the school, such as teachers, students, and staff members. Religious character education can foster good morals and character among students. Once a character is formed, students will spontaneously adopt good habits both inside and outside of school. According to Alim (2017), religious character is defined as an observable, positive attitude or behavior that becomes an inherent characteristic of students, leading to Islam, with the aim of strengthening faith and devotion to Allah SWT (Rahmawati et al., 2019).

Religious activities can increase faith and devotion to God Almighty and accustom students to noble behaviors. Through education, particularly religious life and religious education, individuals will be formed who are faithful, pious, and possess a noble character. The objectives of religious plans or programs, or the development of faith and devotion to God Almighty, are: a. To provide knowledge, understanding, and experience in daily life to cultivate habits of faith and dedication to God Almighty. b. To increase a sense of security and devotion to God Almighty, as well as to develop noble character. c. To instill noble morals in students through active participation. d. To practice religious values in daily life at school, at home, and in the community (Ramadhani et al., 2020).

Zakiah Darajat states that there are two factors influencing the formation of students' religious character: internal factors and external factors (Alim, 2017). Internal factors relate to the student's internal circumstances, including interest, motivation, maturity, and readiness. External factors relate to circumstances that influence the student externally, such as the family environment, community environment, and school environment. In relation to the school environment, the formation of students' religious character at school requires the involvement of the principal, educators and supporting activity programs such as the habit of reading the Asmaul Husana, so that students can have inner peace, independence and noble morals.

Asmaul Husna are the best, most perfect names of Allah, untainted by any flaws, unlike His creatures. These names are based on His attributes (Khoirunnisa, 2017). Reciting Asmaul Husna can bring inner peace, maintain purity of heart, and dissolve sins. Furthermore, reciting Asmaul Husna is a form of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) that can be done in various ways, such as reciting the entire name or reciting only one of the 99 names according to the desired goal.

According to Khoirunnisa (2017), the habit of reciting Asmaul Husna is a practical manifestation of the theory of Islamic religious studies in schools. The habit of reciting Asmaul Husna is a form of character education that schools strive to instill in students, ensuring they have strong character to face the challenges of the times. Someone who recites Asmaul Husna regularly is more emotionally stable than someone who rarely recites (Khoirunnisa, 2017).

Furthermore, by making a habit of reading Asmaul Husana every morning before the learning process at school, students gain inner peace, their hearts become confident and steady, and train students'

discipline (Khoirunnisa, 2017). Rahmawati et al.'s (2019) research on the Application of Religious Culture in Improving the Religious Character of Students at MIN 2 Malang City, has proven effective in influencing students at MIN 2 Malang City in forming good religious character and good morals as evidenced in students' daily lives in the school environment. This research is different from Rahmawati's research which focuses on religious culture, while in this study the focus of the study is on the effect of implementing the habit of reading Asmaul Husana on the religious character of students at Karangdukuh Elementary School which has been going on for approximately three years (Rahmawati et al., 2019).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative ethnographic approach. Ethnography is a qualitative strategy that investigates a cultural group in a natural environment (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this research focuses on the effects of implementing the habit of reciting the Asmaul Husana, which has been running effectively for approximately three years, on the religious character of students at Karangdukuh Elementary School.

The research was conducted from August 20, 2025, to October 20, 2025, at Karangdukuh Elementary School, Banjarsari, Surakarta. According to Creswell (2013), the presence of the researcher in qualitative research is a crucial factor in the research process, as the researcher serves as the key instrument. The subjects of this study were students at Karangdukuh Elementary School. The respondents were the principal, MY, of Karangdukuh Elementary School, and two class teachers, HT and HN.

Data collection was conducted using the following methods: 1) Observation. This method was used to obtain data on school conditions, the habituation activities carried out before the learning process, and the implementation of the habituation activities to develop religious character. 2) Interviews. The purpose of the interview method was to obtain data on the implementation of habituation methods to foster students' religious character, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. The data sources were the principal and teachers to determine their responses to the habituation of reciting the Asmaul Husana and the extent to which students had implemented the habituation at school. 3) Documentation. Documentation can be conducted by searching for data regarding things in the form of notes, books, newspapers, minutes. Data analysis used data reduction, data presentation, conclusions, and verification (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted using three activity flows: 1) Data reduction. Data reduction is the process of selecting data, summarizing, selecting the main points, focusing on important points, searching for themes and patterns, and discarding unnecessary elements. 2) Data presentation. Data presentation involves grouping similar data and then writing it in narrative form, possibly using tables and graphs, to facilitate drawing conclusions. 3) Drawing Conclusions: After collecting and analyzing data, the next step is interpretation, which is then compiled into a conclusion (Sugiyono, 2016).

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Karangdukuh Elementary School offers a character education development program for all students in grades 1 through 6, specifically in the area of religion. This program encourages students to recite the Asmaul Husana (the Beautiful Names of Allah) daily before the start of classes. This program will begin in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. This effort aims to prevent children from engaging in negative behavior, as we are now in the age of technology, allowing students to access everything easily. It also aims to encourage students to pray before starting classes. As stated by the principal, MY:

*"I read about the effects and benefits of reciting the Asmaul Husana. After that, I conveyed to the teachers that at the beginning of the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, I would implement a class-based Asmaul Husana recitation activity before the start of classes for all students, from grades 1 to 6, in the schoolyard. It would be conducted collectively (classically) in the schoolyard, led by one teacher. Students were given an Asmaul Husana guidebook from Pondok Pandanaran. I initiated the Asmaul Husana recitation program as an effort to encourage*

*students to always pray to Allah through the Asmaul Husana and to prevent negative student behaviors in this technological age."*

In this technological age, children appear very passive and rarely socialize with their families and communities. Most children today are more focused on the screen in front of them than playing with their peers. As a result, children often miss out on valuable time spent with family, studying, developing talents, or playing with friends because their focus is taken over by their phone screens or other technology (Lestari & Handayani, 2023).

Before the program to familiarize students with the recitation of the Asmaul Husana (Asmaul Husana) was implemented, problems often arose, such as students refusing to go to school, playing online games during school hours, first-grade students being disobedient and argumentative. During the Dhuhur prayer, students had to be told and waited on by teachers because they lacked the awareness to fulfill their religious obligations. Furthermore, students often fought and teased each other. As MY stated:

*"There were often problems, there were always problems. Students refused to go to school, students liked to surf the internet, many first-grade children were fussy, students had to be told and waited on during prayer, children often fought, and children teased."*

The implementation of the Asmaul Husana recitation program has been running for approximately three years and has had a positive impact on the school and the students' religious character. This includes a lack of complex problems at school, and a positive change in students' attitudes and religious character. As MY stated:

*"After the Asmaul Husana (Asmaul Husana) was introduced, there are no more complicated problems. There are no naughty kids, and the fussy first-grade kids are gone. This has had a positive impact on the children's spirituality. There are no more fights or teasing. The children are obedient and easy to manage during extracurricular scouting activities. The children in grades 3 through 6 are obedient during congregational Dhuhur and Dzuhur prayers without having to be chased by teachers. Furthermore, the children are more enthusiastic about praying before class, and the teachers are respectful and obedient. When teachers arrive, they are immediately chased after, asking to shake hands and kiss hands, greeting and greeting each other, and throwing trash in the trash cans."*

Furthermore, according to HT and RN, making the habit of reciting the Asmaul Husana (The Beautiful Names of Allah) influences students to develop good religious character. This activity has been proven effective in transforming religious character. This is evident in students' habits of performing the Dhuhur prayer and the Dzuhur prayer consciously, greeting each other when meeting, and practicing smiling, greeting, greeting, and being polite and courteous (the 5S) when meeting friends and teachers.

*"The role of the Asmaul Husana is very effective in changing students' religious character, such as performing the Dhuhur and Dzuhur prayers without being prompted, and practicing smiling, greeting, greeting, and being polite and courteous (the 5S)."*

The implementation of the Asmaul Husana recitation habit in elementary schools has inspired other schools to implement the Asmaul Husana recitation habit in their schools before the start of the learning process. As stated by MY:

*"The Asmaul Husana recitation program has proven effective in transforming students into more positive individuals with good religious character. This has led several other elementary schools to follow suit and begin implementing Asmaul Husana recitation activities before the start of the learning process."*

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it shows the influence of the implementation of the habit of reading Asmaul Husana on the religious character of students, this can be seen from the behavior of students who do not skip school, students become individuals with good religious character such as saying hello and greeting when meeting friends or teachers, praying before and after the learning process, carrying out congregational Dhuhur and Dzuhur prayers with their own awareness, throwing garbage in its place, loving each other among friends, and obeying and respecting teachers. These results are in line with the research of Rahmawati, et al. (2019) on the implementation of effective religious culture in influencing students of MIN 2 Malang City in forming good religious character and good morals as evidenced in the daily lives of students in the school environment (Rahmawati et al., 2019). In addition, the habit of Asmaul Husana instills students' religious character so that students will grow into individuals whose faith in the greatness of Allah SWT is increasing (Ma'arif, 2018). The implementation of reciting

the Asmaul Husana (The Beautiful Names of Allah) at Karangdukuh Elementary School has been proven effective in modifying students' character, leading to them developing strong religious character.

This is in line with [Khoirunnisa's \(2017\)](#) statement that the habit of reading Asmaul Husana every morning before the learning process at school makes students gain inner peace, their hearts become confident and steady, and trains students' discipline, so that students avoid doing negative things such as playing truant at school and committing acts of aggression. Furthermore, reciting the Asmaul Husana can have a psychological impact on a person's inner experiences, fostering feelings of peace of mind, gratitude, patience, and sincerity. A person with a calm heart is likely to have self-control, self-motivation, and aspects of emotional intelligence ([Khoirunnisa, 2017](#)).

Schools, as educational institutions, essentially aim to prepare students to solve life's problems now and in the future by developing their potential. Therefore, education plays a role in shaping students' character. In other words, a professional educational process can shape students' character. Schools, as the second institution after the family, play a crucial role in instilling life values in individuals. In schools, individuals are taught how these values should be realized in their daily lives. Students spend more time at school than anywhere else, therefore, schools serve as a place for character formation. To develop student character, schools can implement activities both routinely and spontaneously ([Nantara, 2022](#)).

The character education program is a policy implemented by the government at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education. The program's purpose is to facilitate the government's efforts to shape the nation's character in line with national ideals. Through character education implemented in schools, families, and communities, it is hoped that students will develop strong character through consistent practice ([Fitriyani et al., 2024](#)).

Character education is an effort made by teachers to instill character in students, fostering caring, honesty, responsibility, diligence, and respect for others. Teachers can set an example and serve as role models for students, by reflecting on how they deliver material, how they speak, and how they demonstrate tolerance ([Salim, 2022](#)).

Within the school environment, teachers play a crucial role in shaping a child's character. Teachers are a vital component in the educational process. This is because an educational process without teachers will produce less than optimal results. The role of teachers is not merely as teaching staff but also as educators, educating students in morals and qualities. In schools, character education should also be embedded in every learning process, such as teaching methods, curriculum content, assessments, and so on. Furthermore, schools also teach various aspects of character-building in children, including religious education, discipline, tolerance, honesty, and nationalism. All of these are taught to foster positive character in children ([Salim, 2022](#)).

## **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

The implementation of the Asmaul Husana (Asmaul Husana) recitation program has significantly improved the religious character of students at Karangdukuh Elementary School. This was evident in the students' behavior before the Asmaul Husana recitation program. Some students frequently fought and teased each other, had to wait for teachers during the Dhuhr prayer, and some skipped school to play online games during school hours. However, after the Asmaul Husana recitation program, none of the students skipped school and developed positive religious character traits, such as greeting and greeting friends and teachers, praying before and after lessons, performing the Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers in congregation, disposing of trash properly, caring for each other, and obeying and respecting teachers. The implementation of the Asmaul Husana recitation program at Karangdukuh Elementary School has proven effective in modifying students' character, leading them to develop good religious character.

### **4.2. Recommendations**

Suggestions based on the results of this study are: 1) Parents are encouraged to cultivate positive habits for their children, especially elementary school-aged children, who are not yet capable of abstract

thinking. One such habit is reciting the Asmaul Husana (The Beautiful Names of Allah). 2) School administrators should continue to implement and improve this religious habituation method, with ongoing support and the provision of adequate tools, to achieve optimal classroom management and student achievement. 3) Future researchers are encouraged to expand on this research, for example by examining the positive impact of reciting the Asmaul Husana on students, or designing and developing the Asmaul Husana as a method for character building.

**Ethical Approval**

Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement**

Not applicable.

**Confidentiality Statement**

Not applicable.

**Authors' Contributions**

DRP conceptualized the study, conducted field observations and interviews, and drafted the manuscript. ARM and EFA contributed to data interpretation and manuscript revision. AAS assisted in data collection and literature review. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

**Disclosure Statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest related to this research.

**Data Availability Statement**

Not applicable.

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