



Student Learning Life in Islamic Elementary Schools with Boarding and Full-Day Systems: A Qualitative Study on Activity Patterns, Habituation, and Character Building

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kehidupan belajar siswa Madrasah Ibtidaiyah berbasis boarding school dan full day school dalam konteks pola aktivitas harian, proses pembiasaan nilai, dan pembentukan karakter. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang dilaksanakan di MI Quran Terpadu Al Fauzan yang menerapkan kedua sistem dalam satu manajemen pendidikan terpadu. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi dengan informan yang terdiri dari kepala madrasah, guru, pengurus asrama dan siswa yang dipilih secara purposive berdasarkan keterlibatan langsung dalam kehidupan belajar. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, serta diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kehidupan belajar siswa berlangsung secara terstruktur sejak dini hari hingga malam hari pada sistem boarding school, dan hingga sore hari pada sistem full day school. Pembiasaan nilai religius, disiplin, dan tanggung jawab dilakukan melalui praktik ibadah berjamaah, hafalan Al-Qur'an, kepatuhan terhadap jadwal, serta keterlibatan dalam tugas harian. Pembentukan karakter siswa berlangsung sebagai proses berkelanjutan yang terintegrasi dalam kehidupan belajar sehari-hari sebagai pengalaman edukatif yang holistik.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the learning life of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students in boarding school and full day school systems in terms of daily activity patterns, value habituation processes, and character formation. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at MI Quran Terpadu Al Fauzan, which implements both systems within an integrated educational management. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving informants consisting of the principal, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and students selected purposively based on their direct involvement in students' learning life. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, and validated through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that students' learning life is structured from early dawn until night in the boarding school system and until afternoon in the full day school system. The habituation of religious, discipline, and responsibility values is carried out through congregational prayers, Qur'an memorization, adherence to structured schedules, and involvement in daily responsibilities. Character formation occurs as a continuous process integrated within students' daily learning life as a holistic educational experience.

INTRODUCTION

Students' learning life at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level constitutes a fundamental phase in the formation of learners' basic character. At this stage, the educational process is not solely oriented toward academic achievement but also toward the internalization of values through learning experiences that occur comprehensively in everyday life. Students' learning

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life is not limited to formal classroom activities; rather, it encompasses the entirety of daily experiences, including social interactions, activity routines, and value habituation that gradually shape students' attitudes, behaviors, and character (Radinger & Boeskens, 2021) (Fitri et al., 2024). In this context, the learning environment plays a strategic role as a space for internalizing religious values, discipline, responsibility, and social ethics.

Along with the increasing demand for strengthening character education, various Islamic educational institutions, particularly Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, have developed education models based on boarding school and full day school systems. These two models provide longer learning durations compared to regular systems, thereby enabling more intensive and continuous value habituation processes (Salsabila Amrin et al., 2026; Saputra et al., 2024; Gustama et al., 2025). In the boarding school system, students' learning life takes place over a 24-hour period within a controlled environment, whereas in the full day school system, students spend most of their time at school with structured activities until the afternoon. This condition indicates that both educational models function not only as instructional systems but also as living environments that shape students' learning experiences holistically.

Previous studies have shown that the full day school system contributes to the development of religious character and the improvement of student discipline through longer and more structured learning time management (Nisa, 2023; Rohmatun & Ardiansa, 2024; Alwi Bashori & Mohammad Makinuddin, 2025; Karo-Karo et al., 2020). Meanwhile, boarding schools are considered effective in fostering independence, leadership, and responsibility through the management of dormitory life integrated into students' daily activities (Akbar et al., 2022; Lailatul Maskuro et al., 2025; Muswara & Zalnur, 2019; Suntara et al., 2019). The management of boarding-based educational systems also plays an important role in character formation through the integration of academic, religious, and social activities carried out continuously in daily life (Muflikhah & Citraningsih, 2025; Rohman et al., 2024; Laila et al., 2024). These findings indicate that both educational systems make significant contributions to character formation through structured activity management and learning environments. However, most of these studies still position character as an end result without deeply examining how the formation process occurs within students' daily learning life.

In the context of Islamic education, character formation is strengthened through moral development, habituation of worship, and the integration of religious values into daily life (Laisaan & Husni, 2019; Khosiah et al., 2023; Pahrurroji, 2025). In addition, the full day school system has also demonstrated effectiveness in value internalization through longer and

more structured time management (Khoirul Anwar & Ashari Ashari, 2025; Diana & Kholila, 2023; Firdiansyah & Sadan, 2025; Wati et al., 2023). Nevertheless, studies that comprehensively link daily activity patterns, value habituation processes, and character formation as a unified educational experience remain limited. Previous research tends to examine these aspects separately, thus failing to provide a holistic picture of students' learning life as an integrated process. Moreover, studies that specifically position Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students within both boarding school and full day school systems in a single integrated educational institution are still relatively rare. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining students' learning life as a process that encompasses the integration of daily activities, value habituation, and character formation within a unified educational system.

However, most studies still emphasize the outcomes of character formation rather than learning life as a comprehensive educational experience. Therefore, this study focuses on how daily activity patterns and value habituation processes in boarding and full day school systems contribute to the character formation of MI students. Accordingly, this study emphasizes learning life as a comprehensive educational experience rather than merely focusing on the outcomes of character formation. It aims to provide a more comprehensive perspective in understanding boarding school and full day school-based education by describing students' daily activity patterns, analyzing the processes of habituating religious values, discipline, and responsibility, and examining their contributions to the character formation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, as proposed by Creswell, aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of students' learning life within the context of boarding school and full day school-based education systems in a specific educational setting. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on exploring meanings, experiences, and value habituation practices that naturally occur in students' daily life within the school environment. Through a case study design, the researcher is able to explore the phenomenon of students' learning life contextually and holistically, thereby obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of daily activity patterns, value habituation processes, and the dynamics of character formation within an integrated educational system (Suntara et al., 2019; Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The study was conducted at MI Quran Terpadu Al Fauzan, an Islamic educational institution that implements both boarding school and full day school systems within a unified educational management. These two systems were not positioned as objects of comparison, but rather as integral parts of students' learning life within the same educational environment. The research subjects included the principal, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and students involved in learning activities and value habituation practices within the school environment. The subjects were selected purposively, considering their direct involvement and experience in students' learning life (Campbell et al., 2020).

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine students' daily activity patterns, value habituation practices, as well as social and religious interactions within school life. In-depth interviews were carried out to obtain comprehensive insights into experiences, perceptions, and character formation strategies from the perspectives of the principal, teachers, and students. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complement the data, including activity schedules, value habituation programs, and other relevant documents related to students' learning life (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out simultaneously with data collection, enabling the researcher to develop in-depth interpretations of the studied phenomena (Nowell et al., 2017). The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants, while technique triangulation involved comparing findings from observation, interviews, and documentation. In addition, data credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement and peer debriefing to ensure the reliability of the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at MI Quran Terpadu Al Fauzan, findings were obtained regarding students' learning life in boarding school and full day school systems, encompassing daily activity patterns, value habituation processes, and the dynamics of character formation.

Students' Daily Activity Patterns

The findings indicate that students' daily activity patterns in the boarding school system are structured from early dawn until night. Activities begin in the last third of the night with the performance of tahajjud prayer in congregation, reflecting the internalization of religious values through consistent worship practices from the early hours of the day.

Table 1. Students' Daily Activity Patterns in Boarding School

Time	Activity
03.30–04.12	Tahajjud Prayer
04.12–04.45	Fajr Prayer in congregation and Qur'an recitation
04.45–06.30	Morning routine and breakfast
06.45–12.00	Formal learning activities
12.00–12.30	Dhuhr Prayer in congregation
12.30–13.30	Lunch and rest
13.30–15.00	Afternoon Qur'an recitation
15.00–15.45	Asr Prayer in congregation and language activities
15.45–17.17	Independent activities
17.17–18.30	Maghrib Prayer in congregation and Qur'an recitation
18.30–19.45	Isha Prayer in congregation and dinner
19.45–20.00	Independent study
20.00–03.00	Night rest

This structured schedule demonstrates that students' learning life takes place holistically over a 24-hour period within a controlled and integrated environment. Interview results further indicate that such structured routines contribute significantly to the formation of students' habits: "The students are already accustomed to following the schedule from morning until night; even waking up at night for tahajjud has become a habit," (NR, Dormitory Supervisor, 2026). Meanwhile, in the full day school system, students follow similar activities from morning until afternoon without the continuation of structured activities at night.

Value Habituation Process

The findings indicate that value habituation is integrated into students' daily activities. Religious values are developed through the implementation of routine worship practices, such as congregational prayers, Qur'an memorization, and the recitation of selected surahs. Discipline is reflected in students' adherence to the established activity schedules. Students are required to follow the entire sequence of activities in an orderly and timely manner. "If students do not follow the schedule, they are usually immediately reminded and guided to return to being disciplined," (NM, Teacher Interview, 2026). In addition, the value of responsibility develops through students' involvement in daily tasks, such as submitting

memorization, maintaining cleanliness, and participating in independent learning activities. This habituation process demonstrates that values are not merely taught conceptually but are internalized through repeated real-life practices in students' everyday lives.

Students' Character Formation

The findings indicate that students' character formation occurs through a continuous process embedded in their daily lives. Religious character is developed through the regular intensity of worship practices, discipline is shaped through structured and consistent daily activities, and responsibility evolves through the completion of assigned tasks. "We feel more accustomed to being disciplined because all activities are already scheduled," (ZA, Student Interview, 2026). The boarding school environment exerts a stronger influence on character formation, as students remain within an educational setting for 24 hours. In contrast, within the full day school system, character formation is also influenced by the family environment. These findings suggest that character formation is the result of an interaction between structured activities, value habituation, and a consistently supportive educational environment.

Discussion

Daily Activity Patterns as a Medium for Value Internalization

The findings of this study indicate that students' daily activity patterns function as a primary medium in the process of value internalization through structured and repetitive habituation. Activities carried out consistently such as congregational worship, Qur'an memorization, and adherence to scheduled routines not only establish habitual practices but also provide direct learning experiences embedded in students' everyday lives. This process creates a latent mechanism of value internalization, in which students not only understand values conceptually but also embody them through continuous practice. Thus, learning does not occur solely within formal settings but also through lived experiences integrated into students' daily activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that repeated habituation strengthens value internalization through students' concrete experiences (Saputra et al., 2024) (Maskuro et al., 2025).

In the boarding school system, the integration of religious, academic, and social activities occurs continuously without interruption, resulting in a higher intensity of habituation. Students remain within a controlled environment for 24 hours, ensuring that all activities are embedded with structured value-oriented educational content. This condition enables a more consistent internalization process, as students directly experience life practices

rich in discipline, responsibility, and communal values. Furthermore, intensive social interactions within the dormitory environment reinforce character formation through shared living experiences. These findings align with studies indicating that boarding school environments provide broader opportunities for character development through continuous activity integration (Akbar et al., 2022) (Muswara & Zalnur, 2019). Under such conditions, values are not merely taught but are directly experienced by students in their daily lives.

In contrast, within the full day school system, the integration of religious, academic, and social activities remains present in students' learning life but within a more limited duration compared to the boarding school system. Learning activities and value habituation are structured from morning until afternoon, allowing students to experience value internalization within the school environment. However, after school hours, students return to their family environment, making the continuity of value habituation highly dependent on the conditions and support of the home setting. This suggests that the effectiveness of value internalization in the full day school system relies not only on the school but also on family involvement in sustaining the habituation established at school. This finding is consistent with studies highlighting that the effectiveness of value habituation in full day school systems is influenced by the continuity between school and family environments (Amrin, 2026) (Khoirul Anwar & Ashari Ashari, 2025).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that daily activity patterns function not merely as a means of organizing students' routines but also as a form of hidden curriculum that indirectly shapes character through repeated life experiences. Values such as religiosity, discipline, and responsibility are not explicitly taught solely through theoretical instruction but are internalized through consistent daily practices. Through this process, students come to understand values not only as abstract concepts but as integral components of their habitual behaviors. Therefore, daily activity patterns play a crucial role in gradually and continuously shaping students' character. This indicates that character formation in education is determined not only by instructional content but also by the structure of students' lived learning experiences.

Value Habituation as a Process of Character Education

The value habituation identified in this study indicates that students' character is formed through real practices integrated into their daily learning life. Based on the field findings, religious values are manifested through activities such as congregational worship, Qur'an memorization and muroja'ah (revision), as well as the habituation of prayers in every activity.

Meanwhile, discipline and responsibility are developed through adherence to schedules, the implementation of daily tasks, and participation in social activities within the school environment. These activities function not merely as routines but also as learning experiences directly encountered by students in real-life contexts. This process demonstrates that students do not only receive values as knowledge but also internalize them through repeated and consistent practices. Therefore, value habituation within students' learning life serves as a primary means of character formation through sustained concrete experiences (Laisaan & Husni, 2019) (Khosiah et al., 2023).

The findings also reveal that the process of character formation is inherently practical, in which students learn through direct experience or learning by doing in every activity they engage in. Value learning does not occur solely through teachers' explanations in the classroom but through students' active involvement in carrying out activities that embody character values. For instance, routine worship practices, participation in daily tasks, and social interactions among students serve as effective learning media for deeply instilling values. This process enables students to understand values not merely as abstract concepts but as integral parts of their actual behavior. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that habituation is an effective strategy in character education, as it involves students' direct experiences in the learning process (Alwi Bashori & Mohammad Makinuddin, 2025) (Rohmatun & Ardiansa, 2024).

Furthermore, students' active involvement in daily activities strengthens the internalization of values, as students are not merely passive recipients of instructions but active subjects engaged in value practices. They participate in various activities that demand responsibility, cooperation, and independence, thereby gaining personal experience in enacting these values. Such involvement allows students to develop an internal awareness of the importance of the values being practiced, rather than merely complying with rules mechanically. Consequently, the process of character education is not top-down but evolves through students' active participation in their learning life. This finding aligns with research suggesting that active student engagement enhances value internalization through direct experience and self-reflection (Abdul Baqi et al., 2023; Arif, 2024; Wati et al., 2023; Karo-Karo et al., 2020).

In conclusion, value habituation within the context of students' learning life functions not only as an educational strategy but also as a process of experiential transformation that gradually shapes character through repeated and sustained practices. Values are no longer understood as abstract concepts but become embedded in students' daily behaviors. This

process indicates that character formation does not occur instantly but develops through consistent habituation over time. Therefore, the success of character education is largely determined by the continuity and consistency of students' daily activities within their learning life. In other words, value habituation based on direct experience (learning by doing) serves as an effective approach to deeply and sustainably shape students' character.

Character Formation as a Continuous Process

The findings of this study indicate that students' character formation is a gradual and continuous process embedded in their daily learning life. Character is not formed instantaneously but develops through consistent habituation across various activities undertaken by students. Based on the findings, activities such as congregational worship, adherence to schedules, and participation in daily tasks serve as primary means of shaping character through direct experience. This process demonstrates that character formation is not solely related to the cognitive transmission of values but also to repeated practices through which values become embedded in students' habits. Thus, character formation can be understood as an ongoing process of value internalization within students' learning life (Pahrurroji, 2025; Arif, 2025; Laila et al., 2024).

In the boarding school system, a 24-hour controlled environment enables a more intensive and continuous process of value internalization. Students are immersed in an environment that consistently supports value habituation through structured activities throughout the day, thereby increasing the opportunities for strengthening character. Intensive social interactions, continuous supervision, and the integration of religious and academic activities are key factors that reinforce character formation in this system. These conditions allow students to directly experience value-based practices in various everyday life situations, making values easier to internalize. This finding highlights the strategic role of the boarding school environment in creating an educational ecosystem that supports sustainable character formation (Arif et al., 2023; Rohman et al., 2024).

In contrast to the boarding school system, character formation in the full day school system also occurs through structured activities within the school environment, but within a more limited duration. After school hours, students return to their family environment, which plays a crucial role in continuing the value habituation process established at school. This indicates that the success of character formation in the full day school system depends not only on the school but also on family involvement in creating a supportive environment for value internalization. Therefore, the continuity between school and family environments

becomes a key factor in strengthening students' character formation. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of the family's role as part of the educational ecosystem in supporting students' character development (Radinger & Boeskens, 2021)

Overall, the findings suggest that character formation results from a dynamic interaction between the school and family environments as the two primary contexts of students' learning life. The synergy between these environments is essential to ensure that values cultivated at school continue to be practiced in students' everyday lives outside the school setting. Without such continuity, the process of value internalization may not function optimally. Therefore, strong collaboration between schools and families is necessary to support students' character formation. This underscores that character formation is a long-term process requiring consistency, continuity, and integrated environmental support within students' learning life.

CONCLUSION

Students' learning life in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah within boarding and full day school systems represents an integrated educational experience encompassing religious, academic, and social dimensions. Daily activity patterns serve as the primary foundation for character formation through consistent value habituation in students' everyday lives. The boarding school system provides a higher intensity of habituation due to its continuous implementation within a 24-hour controlled environment, whereas the full day school system creates opportunities for collaboration between school and family in supporting character formation. Character development does not occur instantaneously but emerges as a continuous process shaped through structured and repeated life experiences.

From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces the concept of students' learning life as a holistic educational experience in which daily activities and value habituation function as central elements in character formation. The findings suggest that character is not formed solely through formal instruction but through the integration of learning experiences within students' daily lives.

However, this study is limited to a single educational institution and therefore does not fully capture variations in implementation across broader contexts. Future research is recommended to explore more diverse settings, both across different institutions and through alternative methodological approaches, such as quantitative or mixed methods, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of character formation within boarding school and full day school systems.

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