

# Institutionalizing Kindness as a Systemic Value in Acehese Madrasahs: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Religious Cultural Reconstruction

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study investigated how Acehese madrasahs systemically cultivate kindness (*rahmah*) through religious-cultural practices, bridging gaps between individual virtue ethics and institutional habituation in Islamic education. Data from observations, interviews, and document analysis across three madrasahs in Langsa, Aceh, reveal four key mechanisms: (1) the 5S framework (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa, Sopan, Santun*) routinizing empathetic interactions; (2) ritualized practices (e.g., congregational prayers, Quranic recitation) as moral rehearsals; (3) student-led community service fostering peer mentorship; and (4) Sharia-aligned policies embedding kindness in governance. These mechanisms form an embodied pedagogy where kindness transitions from abstract ideal to habitual behavior via repetition, teacher modeling, and cultural reinforcement. The study integrated Bourdieu's *habitus* (embodied dispositions) and Lickona's *moral knowing-feeling-doing* framework, demonstrating their synergy with Islamic epistemologies such as Sunnah-based rituals and *maqasid al-shariah* (objectives of divine law). While challenges like ritualism persist, reflective practices and peer accountability mitigate superficial compliance. The research offered a scalable model for institutionalizing kindness in Islamic education, emphasizing contextually rooted, policy-practice coherence. Thus, this study contributes to both theoretical discourse and practical application by demonstrating how culturally grounded, systemic approaches within Aceh's Sharia-based context can effectively translate abstract ethical principles into tangible, lived expressions of virtue.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh's distinct status as Indonesia's sole Sharia-governed province positions its madrasahs as institutional laboratories for shaping religious culture. Practices such as the 5S frameworks; i.e., Smile, Greet, Politeness, Courtesy, and Empathy, along with ritual prayers and Sharia-based policies, nurture

students' moral character through daily routines. Particularly, in Aceh province, the educational environments emphasize kindness as a foundation for intellectual and personal growth (Mujiburrahman, 2021; Suciani & Irafadillah Effendi, 2021). In addition, the practices highlight kindness as vital for fostering empathy, solidarity, and respect (Rizal, Iqbal, & MA, 2018), while Dalimunthe (2015) frames it as both a virtue and worship. Echoing this, Rahman (2022) cites a prophetic tradition: "The most perfect faith lies in the best manners," underscoring kindness's transformative power.

Prior research has tended to emphasize *Akhlaq* (Islamic ethics) and classroom-based moral instruction, yet it often overlooks the ways in which institutional practices, student-led initiatives, and ritualized Qur'anic recitation systematically embed kindness into the routines of madrasahs. While kindness is widely acknowledged as fostering emotional intelligence and ethical responsibility, its cultivation through structured institutional mechanisms remains underexplored. In particular, questions about habituation processes and qualitative insights have received little attention (Dalimunthe, 2015; Nurhasanah, 2023).

Religious culture plays a crucial role in reinforcing kindness through value-based learning, daily rituals, role modeling, and the hidden curriculum. These approaches align with Indonesia's National Education Law (No. 20/2003), which mandates the nurturing of pious and morally upright citizens (Rahman, 2022). However, modern education faces mounting challenges as external influences such as social media and shifting family dynamics weaken students' empathy, respect, and communal values. This erosion is compounded by the global rise of individualism and materialism, both of which undermine moral development at local and international levels (Arfan et al., 2022; Hendriani, Rifmasari, Gistituati, & Bentri, 2024; Rahayu; Mutiawati, 2020; Suciani & Irafadillah Effendi, 2021). Consequently, Islamic education faces a crisis where kindness risks becoming an abstract principle rather than a lived practice (Mujiburrahman, 2021).

To counter these challenges, institutionalized character education rooted in religious culture becomes essential. Madrasahs implement the 5S framework and Sharia-aligned policies to transform kindness into a habitual virtue, merging social responsibility with spiritual worship (Nurjanah, Fuad, & Darraz, 2024; Rahmawati, Rofiqoh, Islahati, & Salimi, 2019). Beyond academics, educational institutions function as spaces of cultural inheritance and value formation. In Aceh, for instance, the integration of religious culture into formal education allows students to internalize Islamic teachings and apply them in their daily lives. Although approaches vary across madrasahs, common practices include congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, the 5S framework, Friday infaq, and flash pesantren programs (Fathurrohman, 2016). These structured routines are designed to shape students' character through consistent exposure and role modeling (Hidayati & Musnandar, 2022).

Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of habitus and Lickona's character education model, continuous religious practice fosters the internalization of moral values such as kindness and self-discipline (Arito, Husniyah, & Ramadhanisnaini, 2023; Permata, 2023). Empirical studies confirm the positive impact of these practices on student behavior (Susanti, 2022), though obstacles such as limited student participation and external influences remain (Idris, 2018). Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to analyze how religious culture reconstructs and habituates kindness, offering insights that may help educators and parents create character-rich learning environments.

This study bridges a theoretical lacuna in Islamic education by shifting focus from individual virtue cultivation to institutional culture as the primary driver of habitual kindness, advancing a framework of embodied pedagogy that integrates Sunnah-based rituals with sociocultural theories. This approach explains how abstract ethical principles, such as trust, respect, and caring, become routinized behaviors through structured practices embedded in daily madrasah life (Mujiburrahman, 2021; Rahayu; Mutiawati, 2020). Character education in Aceh transcends classroom instruction, weaving Islamic values and local wisdom into family, school, and community contexts to shape students' personalities with noble character, knowledge, and competitiveness (Abubakar, Sanusi, Razali, Yeniningsih, & Mujiburrahman, 2023). Accordingly, the Aceh' Qanun fosters and nurtures pious, morally upright citizens, embedding Islamic law into systemic practices (Mujiburrahman, 2021). Unlike fragmented curricula, embodied

pedagogy emphasizes holistic, experiential learning, such as ritualized prayers and the 5S framework to cultivate ethical decision-making and social responsibility (Husna, Santoso, & Ismaya, 2022; Mega Nailiya Mawaddah, 2019). Consequently, the practices, madrasahs transform kindness from an abstract ideal into a lived virtue, ensuring alignment with Sharia principles while addressing modern challenges like individualism and moral disengagement (Kolb, 2023; Tahreem Fatima & Aqsa Tasgheer, 2021). This framework positions institutional culture as the nexus of Tarbiyah, where religious rituals, communal engagement, and policy-driven routines collectively sustain ethical values. Through this lens, the study redefines Islamic character education as a systemic, contextually rooted process, offering a replicable model for fostering compassion and ethical agency in Islamic educational ecosystems.

This study demonstrates how structured religious practices transform into habitual kindness within Acehese madrasahs, embedding kindness as a lived, embodied practice rather than an abstract ideal. Accordingly, the study explored the integration of these routines into students' daily lives, which contributes to the learning in everyday life discourse, offering a model where Islamic character education is institutionalized through cultural reconstruction. The study also underscores how repetitive, contextually rooted practices reshape moral dispositions, aligning institutional culture with *Sharia*-guided values to sustain ethical behavior. Central to this inquiry is the question, "*How does religious cultural reconstruction institutionalize kindness as a lived, sustained practice within Acehese madrasahs?*" This question focuses on bridging systemic habituation with Islamic pedagogy, positioning everyday rituals as catalysts for moral agency.

## 2. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate how religious cultural reconstruction institutionalizes kindness in Acehese madrasahs. The design prioritized contextual depth over generalizability (Maguire & Scott-Baumann, 2019), aligning with the focus by examining informal (Owen, 2014), embodied moral practices rather than formal curricula (Weyant, 2022). Case study methodology allowed for a holistic analysis of systemic mechanisms, including how institutional policies, *Sharia*-aligned practices, and student agency intersect to sustain kindness as a lived value.

### 2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate how religious cultural reconstruction institutionalizes kindness in Acehese madrasahs. The design prioritized contextual depth over generalizability (Maguire & Scott-Baumann, 2019), aligning with the focus on examining informal (Owen, 2014), embodied moral practices rather than formal curricula (Weyant, 2022). The design allowed for holistic analysis of systemic mechanisms, including how institutional policies, *Sharia*-aligned practices, and student agency intersect to sustain kindness as a lived value. The methodology aligns with the research goal of examining kindness as a systemic outcome shaped by institutional policies, rituals, and *Sharia*-aligned values. It advances the concept of embodied pedagogy by illustrating how abstract virtues become ingrained through structured routines.

### 2.2. Research Site and Participants

This study employed purposive sampling to select 4 Islamic Studies teachers and 40 students from Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Madrasah Islam Modern (MIM) Kota Langsa, aligning with its focus on religious cultural reconstruction and kindness institutionalization. The participants, teachers, and students selected for their expertise as young Islamic scholars, offered valuable insights into how *Sharia*-aligned policies, the 5S framework, and ritual practices (labeled with letters such as A, B, and so on) are implemented. Their perspectives enriched the study's theoretical framework of embodied pedagogy, linking Islamic epistemologies with sociocultural habituation theories. Including 4 teachers enabled triangulation, revealing nuanced policy implementation and student engagement dynamics. The 40 students (Grades 7-9) represented diverse academic performance, social roles, and demographics,

ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how daily routines foster habitual kindness. MIM Kota Langsa was selected as a modern Islamic school blending traditional Sharia values with contemporary education, providing a rich case for analyzing cultural reconstruction (Zulfitri, Fauzi, & Fakhurrrazi, 2022)

### 2.3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To ensure comprehensive and credible findings, this study employed multiple data collection instruments, including semi-structured interviews, observation checklists, and document analysis. These tools were selected to explore how kindness is institutionalized through religious cultural practices in Acehese madrasahs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Islamic Studies teachers and selected students using open-ended questions designed to probe their perceptions of kindness cultivation, institutional challenges, and the integration of Sharia-based values. Questions included prompts like, (1). "How does the 5S framework influence student behavior?" (2). "What role do teachers play in modeling kindness for students?", (3). "How are acts of kindness encouraged or rewarded in your school?", (4). "How do parents contribute to or support the school's moral and religious goals?" Each interview lasted between 45–60 minutes, conducted either face-to-face or via voice call, and was recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy. Observation checklists were used to document the frequency and consistency of daily practices. Key areas included the implementation of the 5S framework, participation in rituals, and enforcement of Sharia-aligned policies. Document analysis complemented these methods by reviewing curricula, student journals, policy manuals, and Sharia-based regulations to identify how kindness-related values were formalized and reinforced within the institution. Data collection took place over six months (August 2023–January 2024) with biweekly visits to each madrasah. Observations occurred during school hours (8:00 AM–2:00 PM), focusing on both structured routines, such as prayers, and informal moments like recess. Interviews were held after school to avoid disruption to academic schedules. Member checking was employed by sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate interpretations and ensure credibility.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rijal, Kosasih, & Nurdin, 2023) to explore how institutional mechanisms foster the habituation of kindness within Acehese madrasahs. The analytical process began with analytical reduction, where interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents were coded using NVivo software. Key themes, i.e., "5S as Moral Ritual" and "Student Agency" were identified to capture the recurring patterns in how kindness is cultivated through structured religious practices. Data presentation included visual mapping to illustrate how daily routines and institutional practices intersected with Sharia-aligned policies, revealing how kindness becomes an embedded, lived value. Triangulation was used to strengthen the study's validity by cross-verifying data sources: observations of 5S compliance, interviews, and documents. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, several strategies were applied. Credibility was supported by six months of prolonged engagement and multiple data sources. Transferability was achieved through thick descriptions of the madrasah contexts, allowing others to assess the relevance of findings. Dependability was ensured by maintaining audit trails of coding and analytical decisions, while confirmability was enhanced through peer debriefing and iterative analysis, promoting reflexivity and minimizing researcher bias.

### 2.5. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to ethical research standards to protect participants' rights and ensure transparency throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. For student participants, parents provided written consent, while students gave verbal assent after receiving detailed information sheets outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. All participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. To maintain confidentiality, anonymization was applied by using pseudonyms for institutions

and individuals. Additionally, any sensitive information, such as critiques of institutional policies, was carefully redacted to avoid potential harm or misrepresentation in publications. The research fully complied with IAIN Langsa Research Office ethical guidelines, including protocols on data security, storage, and participant privacy. These measures ensured the integrity and ethical soundness of the study from data collection through dissemination.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated how religious cultural reconstruction at MTs MIM Kota Langsa cultivates kindness as a lived practice. Using observations, interviews, and document analysis, the findings are organized into four themes: (1). Religious Culture Formulas at MTs MIM Langsa-Aceh, (2). Teacher Modeling in Character Formation, (3). Student Participation in Kindness Internalization, and (4). Integration of Bourdieu's Habitus and Lickona's Moral Framework. The discussion interprets these findings through Bourdieu's habitus, explaining how routines shape enduring moral dispositions, and Lickona's moral education framework, analyzing the interplay of knowledge, emotion, and action.

#### 3.1. The Formulas of Religious Culture at MTs MIM Kota Langsa-Aceh

Religious culture programs, varying in form and scope according to institutional needs, are fundamental to all madrasahs. At MTs MIM Langsa, these activities, documented in official daily, weekly, monthly, and annual schedules, are summarized in **Table 1** below:

**Table 1. Religious Culture Activities**

Daily	Weekly	Monthly and Annually
a. Social Interaction (Habits 5 S (Smile, Greet, Polite, and Courtesy))	a. Reading surah Yaa Siin	a. Memorize Al Quran
b. Daily worship (Praying, Tadarus, Dhuha prayers and congregational prayers for Zuhr and Asr)	b. Muhadarah c. Infaq d. Reading Shalawat	b. Flash boarding school c. Commemoration of Islamic Holidays

The table above identifies religious cultural activities at MTs MIM Langsa relevant to pedagogical character formation through value internalization. A key reconstructed aspect is the daily worship habit, encompassing congregational prayer, *Tadarus* al-Quran, and group prayers before/after lessons. Mandatory *Zuhr* and *Asr* congregational prayers instill discipline in students and teachers. Meanwhile, the recommended *Dhuha* sunnah prayer fosters spiritual closeness to Allah SWT and strengthens worship habits. Additionally, *Tadarus* al-Quran conducted before lessons aims to enhance students' love for the holy book, improve Quranic literacy, and train their reading and comprehension of its verses.

The Interview findings revealed diverse forms of religious culture implemented at the madrasah, aligned with its vision. As one respondent, Teacher A stated:

*"There are many religious cultures, such as the 5S culture (smile, greeting, greeting, politeness, courtesy) aimed at creating a harmonious atmosphere of mutual respect. Other activities include Quran reading, prayers, reciting shalawat, muhadhrah, murajaah, tahfizh, program pesantren kilat, and Islamic holiday celebrations."*

These findings underscore the fundamental aim of such practices: to cultivate harmony, mutual respect, and moral development within the school community. Khulashah (2023) characterizes these practices as part of the *hidden curriculum*—elements not explicitly included in the formal curriculum, yet highly relevant, adaptable, and integral to character education. In this context, *relevant* refers to their suitability for moral and character formation; *relative* denotes their grounding in the community's ideological, cultural, and religious values that shape the school's ethos; and *flexible* highlights their ability to adapt to varying organizational and societal contexts (Khulashah, 2023).

The hidden curriculum comprises the unplanned and informal processes within and beyond the classroom that transmit values, norms, and social expectations. It plays a vital role in socialization, the reinforcement of social structures, and the development of attitudes and dispositions (Mustaghfiroh, 2014). Although unwritten, it has a profound influence on shaping students' character (Rahayu & Mutiawati, 2020). More specifically, the hidden curriculum includes implicit lessons conveyed through the school environment, institutional routines, and interpersonal interactions—lessons that significantly shape students' moral orientations.

While many educational systems implement hidden curricula unconsciously, Acehese madrasahs intentionally construct and utilize theirs to reinforce Islamic moral values. This intentionality transforms everyday practices into purposeful moral pedagogy (Halstead, 2007; Merry, 2015). Ritualized behaviors—such as the 5S framework (seiri, seiton, seiso, seiketsu, and shitsuke), daily congregational prayers, and Sharia-compliant school policies—collectively constitute a deliberate hidden curriculum that fosters *rahmah* (compassion/kindness) as a core ethical disposition.

Through continuous practice and role modeling, these activities contribute to the formation of what Bourdieu describes as *habitus*—internalized dispositions and reflexes acquired through lived experience rather than formal instruction (King, 2000; Silva & Bartolozzi Ferreira, 2023). In this way, the hidden curriculum becomes not a passive background influence but an intentional mechanism for moral and character development. It exemplifies how Islamic educational philosophy harnesses environmental and experiential learning to align with, and extend, Western theoretical understandings of the hidden curriculum.

Ultimately, the madrasah model presents a replicable framework for converting informal socialization processes into deliberate, culturally grounded strategies for moral habituation—demonstrating the power of integrating indigenous educational philosophies with global pedagogical theory.

Beyond daily worship routines, MTs MIM Langsa cultivates religious values through social interactions, notably the 5S program. This initiative trains students in respectful communication with teachers, peers, and staff, fostering friendliness, mutual respect, and positive relationships. One of our participants, Teacher B, also responds with:

*“We train students to greet everyone as a foundational moral value, ensuring they treat all individuals equally, from janitors to principals. Initially, this may feel compulsory, but over time, it becomes a natural habit”*

The teacher's role in modeling and institutionalizing greetings within the school environment reflects a form of cultural reconstruction rooted in Islamic pedagogy. Greetings are not treated merely as formalities but are cultivated as moral practices aimed at nurturing kindness. Anchored in the Islamic principles of *Musawwah* (equality, Qur'an 17:70) and *Tarbiyah* (moral and holistic education; Mustaghfiroh, 2014), the act of greeting evolves from a compulsory ritual into an embodied moral habit through the formation of *habitus* (Friedland, 2001). This transformation aligns with Lickona's (2024) moral development framework, which emphasizes the interconnected processes of *knowing, feeling, and doing*.

While there is always a risk that ritualized practices may lead to superficial compliance, the systemic integration of moral values—through teacher modeling, peer mentorship, and institutional

policies such as the 5S framework—ensures that these practices are sustained and meaningful. This process of habituation places respect for others at the center of school life, challenging materialistic and individualistic values while reinforcing communal ethics (Rahayu & Mutiawati, 2020).

The cultivation of kindness in Acehnese madrasahs thus represents a holistic moral endeavor that transcends behavioral conformity. It is deeply grounded in the principles of human dignity and equality, emphasizing that genuine kindness cannot be imposed through hierarchical structures but must emerge organically within a framework that acknowledges the equal worth of all individuals—students, teachers, and community members alike.

Lickona's triadic model of moral development provides a strong theoretical foundation for this approach. Students are first introduced to the *knowing* dimension of kindness through Islamic teachings that highlight *Rahmah* (compassion) as a divine attribute to be emulated. This is followed by the *feeling* dimension, where emotional engagement is fostered through peer mentoring, community service, and lived interpersonal experiences. These cognitive and emotional foundations culminate in the *doing* dimension, where moral principles are enacted through daily practices—such as greetings—embedded within institutional routines and policies that affirm equitable treatment and respect for all, regardless of status.

The integration of these dimensions creates a moral ecology in which kindness becomes not merely a prescribed behavior but an internalized ethical disposition. It reflects the convergence of Islamic ethical teachings and universal human values, illustrating how a well-structured moral education system can promote both religious authenticity and human equality. Ultimately, the success of this approach depends on balancing repetition with reflection—transforming greetings from externally enforced norms into spontaneous expressions of virtue.

This model of 5S advances embodied pedagogy, demonstrating how Islamic epistemologies intersect with sociocultural theories to institutionalize kindness through lived practice, offering scalable strategies for ethical education reform. Particularly, specific practices include using polite language, showing deference to teachers, and seeking permission before acting, all integral to the madrasah's embedded religious culture. The students A pointed out as follows:

*"We learn to use 'permisi' (excuse me) before entering a room and 'terima kasih' (thank you) even for small favors. Our teacher says this is adab—respecting others is part of faith."*

The next participants, the students C, also provide a respond:

*"At home, my parents noticed I stopped interrupting conversations. I now wait for others to finish speaking. Madrasah taught me patience in words."*

The students above exemplified embodied pedagogy by merging Islamic epistemologies with sociocultural theories to institutionalize kindness as a lived practice. The practices like using polite language, "*permisi*" and "*terima kasih*" and seeking permission before acting, the madrasah transforms abstract moral values into habitual, embodied behaviors. Student responses illustrate this integration: one explicitly links polite language to *Adab*, framing respect as a religious obligation tied to verses like Surah Luqman (31:19), which emphasizes humility in speech (Idris, 2018). Another student notes how madrasah training reshaped their communication style at home, demonstrating how institutional routines transcend school walls, aligning with Bourdieu's habitus (Huang, 2019; Silva & Bartolozzi Ferreira, 2023), repeated actions internalized as dispositions. These practices also reflect Lickona's moral education framework, where students progress from knowing, understanding *Adab* as faith-based duty, to doing consistently applying politeness and feeling empathizing with others' dignity. Thus, the practices emphasized on deference to teachers and communal ethics further reinforces how the madrasah's religious culture systematizes kindness, offering a scalable model for ethical reform.

Additional daily practices reinforcing religious values include tolerance, focusing to fasting on Mondays or Thursdays, the students D mentioned that:

*“Fasting on Mondays is the Prophet’s way. My teacher said it’s like a gift to Allah, and He gives us strength in return. When I fast, I feel closer to Him, even if I’m tired. It also teaches me to be patient with friends who annoy me!”*

Furthermore, relating committing Dhuha prayers, the students E mentioned that:

*“Dhuha is early morning, before starting learning. My teacher says it’s like starting the day with Allah. I feel calm after praying, even if I’m nervous about tests. It’s like a reset button for my heart.”*

The student’s reflection illustrates how MTs MIM Kota Langsa’s religious culture integrates structured rituals into systemic moral formation. The formulation of these deeds as both Sunnah adherence and a devotional exchange with Allah, the practice fosters spiritual closeness and resilience, aligning with Khulashah’s (2023) emphasis on mentorship in spiritual intelligence. Teacher-guided theological context “gift to our body -*sedekah untuk tubuh*” and peer modeling transform rituals into tools for socio-spiritual development, where patience cultivated during fasting translates to kindness in peer interactions. The deeds exemplify the madrasah’s formula on institutionalizing voluntary practices within Islamic epistemologies to embed empathy, self-awareness, and communal harmony, ensuring religious culture permeates daily life. Furthermore, daily practices such as congregational *Zuhr* prayers, Quranic *Tadarus Istighosah*, and communal supplication contribute to building a strong sense of spiritual togetherness within the madrasah. These activities form the foundation of the school’s religious culture. Actively supervised by teachers who offer guidance and support, they not only strengthen students’ spiritual connection to Allah but also deepen their religious awareness and promote a harmonious, value-driven environment.

The formulation of religious capital is cultivated through embodied participation in structured practices and social interactions, aligning with Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic capital. The *Tahfizh* (Quranic memorization), consistent fasting, and prayer—grants students’ recognition from peers and teachers, symbolizing piety and commitment. This capital transcends individual achievement, functioning as a communal resource to reinforce ethical conduct and solidarity. For instance, students who excel in rituals often mentor others, fostering peer accountability and collective identity. Over time, these practices shape the school’s moral ecology, where symbolic capital is redistributed to strengthen communal bonds. Consequently, the processes cored in voluntary acts as markers of piety, the madrasah transforms religious routines into tools for systemic moral formation, embedding values like humility, patience, and empathy into daily interactions. Students’ behaviors align with Lickona’s (2024) moral development stages, demonstrating progression from *knowing* to *doing*. Moral Doing manifests in observable behaviors: consistent 5S greetings, patience during fasting, and prosocial actions like sharing snacks. Observational evidence reveals a shift from mechanical compliance to habituation, as seen in greetings transitioning from compulsory to natural habit. This progression illustrates how systemic repetition, teacher modeling, and peer reinforcement integrate *knowing* (theological understanding), *feeling* (spiritual-emotional resonance), and *doing* (consistent action), embedding kindness as a transferable disposition across contexts (e.g., home, school).

### 3.2. *The role of teacher modeling in character formation*

Teacher modeling shapes character by embodying Islamic values through actions like inclusive greetings (janitors to principals), framing fasting as a “gift to Allah,” and linking polite speech “*permisi*,” and “*terima kasih*” to adab. These practices align with Lickona’s moral framework: students’ progress from knowing to feeling and doing. Observational evidence shows greetings shift from compulsory to

habit, with students attributing behavioral changes to teacher examples. As Khulashah (2023) notes, this hidden curriculum transforms rituals into relational ethics. Teachers, embodying *tarbiyah*, convert theology into habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), and Lickona's (2024) moral development stages, not merely taught. The teacher B mentioned that:

*"I greet every staff member daily, as ordinary manner, to show students that kindness has no hierarchy. The Qur'an teaches equality, and my actions make this principle real for them."*

The teacher responded that the intentional act of treating equally for all people serves as more than a gesture of politeness; it is a pedagogical expression of Qur'anic equality (*musawwah*, Surah Al-Isrā' 17:70), translating abstract theology into embodied moral instruction. Framed as "ordinary" yet deliberate, this practice model's kindness without hierarchy, functioning as part of the hidden curriculum (Khulashah, 2023). It aligns with Lickona's (2024) moral formation framework: students first achieve *moral knowing* through the teacher's verbal explanation that the Qur'an teaches equality, then develop *moral feeling* by observing and empathizing with inclusive behaviors, especially toward non-teaching staff (Mustaghfiroh, 2014). Over time, this evolves into *moral doing*, as evidenced by students spontaneously greeting custodial staff—a behavior initially enforced but gradually internalized, reflecting Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. By grounding religious duty (*Ibādah*) in everyday ethics, the teacher avoids ritualism and exemplifies *Tarbiyah*, holistic education where educators act as moral exemplars (Qur'an 33:21). Student testimonials, such as learning to wait their turn in conversations at home, further confirm the transferability of these values beyond school. The next participant, the teacher D, mentioned:

*"I instructed by exemplify my student to exemplify not to interrupt people when they are talking, but waits for everyone to finish speaking. Then, say what your intentions are."*

The teacher D exemplified a modeling construction the act of waiting to speak until others finish, transforms abstract etiquette into embodied *Adab*. This aligns with Surah Luqman 31:19, *"Be moderate in your pace and lower your voice"* and operationalizes *Tarbiyah* through performative pedagogy. This practice exemplifies how teacher embodiment of virtues, making patience visible, scaffolds students' progression from knowledge to embodied virtue. Interviews from MTs MIM Langsa demonstrated how teacher modeling effectively operationalizes Lickona's moral development stages and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Teachers link daily rituals, such as fasting and greetings, to core Islamic values like equality and manners, guiding students through *moral knowing* (understanding the religious basis), *moral feeling* (internalizing empathy and calm), and *moral doing* (exhibiting respectful behaviors such as polite speech and increased patience). Inclusive greetings, initially perceived as compulsory, evolve into natural habits through repetition and observation, exemplifying Bourdieu's *habitus*, the internalization of values through lived practice (Huang, 2019). Students' reflections, such as *"her habit became mine,"* underscore the relational transmission of ethics, highlighting how teacher behavior becomes a model for communal identity (Huang, 2019). These findings validate Khulashah's (2023) emphasis on mentorship, demonstrating that teachers do not merely instruct but convert abstract theological principles into embodied, socially meaningful dispositions.

Teachers at MTs MIM Langsa emphasize that strategic implementation —through consistent policies, routine habituation, and exemplary behavior—is critical to sustaining religious cultural reconstruction. Their modeling of Islamic values (e.g., inclusive greetings, fasting as worship) aligns with Fakhrurrazi et al. (2021), which underscores the role of educators in transforming rituals into embodied ethics. The teachers A mentioned that:

*"We start every class with a 5S routine: Smile, Greet, Politeness, Courtesy, Empathy. It's not just*

*a rule—it's a habit. Students used to roll their eyes at 'Terima Kasih' for pencils, but now they do it without prompting. Repetition makes it part of their character."*

The teacher A mentioned the 5S routine implementation at MTs MIM illustrates the strategic formation of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) through consistent repetition, turning externally imposed behavior into internalized virtues of kindness. Initially met with resistance, the routine gradually became second nature, embodying Bourdieu's notion of habitus as internalized dispositions shaped by structured practices. This aligns with Lickona's (2024) moral development stages: students move from moral knowing to moral feeling (developing empathy), and finally to moral doing. The practice is an actionable etiquette rooted in Islamic values, such as *Rahmah* (mercy) and *Husn al-Khulq* (good character); the teacher grounds faith in daily interactions. The shift from resistance to natural behavior reflects the "Developing Conscience" stage, where discomfort leads to moral integration. Routine implementation, "we start every class" builds a cultural scaffold that nurtures character. As one student noted, "respecting others is part of faith" (Qur'an 49:13), demonstrating how repeated practice dissolves the line between rule and habit, making kindness a lived expression of Islamic identity. The next respondent also mentioned about consistent policy and routine habituation, the teacher said that:

*"Our policy is clear: kindness isn't optional. Teachers greet janitors and principals equally, model patience during conflicts, and enforce Quranic recitation. Students see this daily, so they don't question it—it becomes their normal."*

This declaration highlights how institutional policy at MTs MIM operationalizes kindness as a non-negotiable virtue, embedding abstract Islamic values into a lived moral ecosystem. Mandating egalitarian teacher conduct, treating others equally, and consistent modeling of patience serves as coercive scaffolding for the formation of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). As students internalize these norms, kindness becomes normalized, reflecting the crystallization of doxic beliefs—behaviors so ingrained they are no longer questioned. This process aligns with Lickona's (2024) moral development stages: moral knowing is established through clear policies rooted in Qur'anic ethics (e.g., *Musawwah* and *Sabr*); moral feeling emerges as students emotionally attune to modeled empathy; and moral doing is realized through the consistent enactment of behavioral rituals such as Qur'anic recitation and polite speech. The hidden curriculum, as emphasized by Khulashah (2023), is reinforced not through rhetoric but through visible, daily teacher conduct. As one teacher noted, "Students see this daily, so they don't question it," illustrating how prophetic modeling (Sunnah) embeds ethics via relational saturation.

Resembling embedding Islamic teachings into daily life, the teacher C mentioned that:

*"Our goal isn't just Quranic recitation—it's connecting verses to action. When we read Surah Al-Insan about sharing, we organize food drives. Students learn kindness isn't theoretical; it's living the Qur'an"*

The teacher C pointed out about the pedagogical approach transcends ritualistic engagement by operationalizing the Qur'an as a living guide for embodied ethics. Linking Surah Al-Insan (76:8-9)—which praises feeding the needy solely for Allah's sake, to concrete initiatives like food drives exemplifies *Tarbiyah* through experiential tafsir. This method dismantles ritualism by rejecting rote recitation in favor of moral activation, echoing Lickona's (2024) moral doing stage and fulfilling the Qur'anic call to "believe and do righteous deeds" (103:3). In addition, the regular service tied to scripture fosters habitus (Bourdieu), where repeated acts like donating food build kindness as a natural disposition. Theoretical implications include disrupting dualism in religious education by making ethics tangible—students learn kindness not only through interpretation but by "distributing bread." The food drive actualizes Khulashah's (2023) hidden curriculum by contextualizing Qur'anic sharing within local needs, forming an epistemology of action where knowledge requires practice to achieve *Ihsan*

(excellence). Furthermore, the student reflections, "*fasting teaches patience*" and "*respect is part of faith*", demonstrate internalization. Thus, this approach transforms the madrasah into a space of lived revelation, cultivating *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* through prophetic pragmatism.

Teachers at MTs MIM Langsa pointed out that strategic implementation, through consistent policies, routine habituation, and teacher modeling of Islamic values, sustains religious cultural reconstruction. Their approach aligns with Fakhurrizi et al. (2021), which highlights educators' role in transforming rituals into embodied ethics. Collaboration with parents via reflection sheets and community events extends these values beyond school walls, reinforcing *akhlakul karimah* (noble character).

### 3.3. *The student's participation in internalizing kindness.*

The Student participation at MTs MIM Langsa goes beyond passive compliance, actively driving the internalization of kindness through structured religious practices. Teachers engage students via daily rituals, i.e., 5S greetings and communal prayers, social initiatives and ethical modeling. These activities transform abstract Islamic values into embodied dispositions, aligning with Bourdieu's habitus theory, where repeated actions normalize kindness as an unconscious habit, and Lickona's moral framework, which emphasizes the progression from knowing to doing.

The first participants, the students C mentioned that:

*"At first, saying 'Terima Kasih' felt forced. Now I do it without thinking, like when my sister hands me a pencil. It's just... automatic. My teacher says this is Adab, but it doesn't feel like a rule anymore"*

This student's shift from feeling "*forced*" to expressing kindness "*automatically*" illustrates the successful internalization of religious habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), where virtue becomes embodied through structured experience. This transformation is driven by three key mechanisms: ritual repetition, where daily use of "*Terima Kasih*" within the madrasah's 5S framework cultivates automatic behavioral patterns; theological reframing, as teachers connect polite speech to Adab, positioning kindness as a spiritual obligation rather than mere social etiquette; and domain transfer, evidenced by the student applying the *practice at home* ("*when my sister hands me a pencil*"), showing that internalized values transcend institutional boundaries. The student's remark that it "*doesn't feel like a rule anymore*" reflects doxic internalization—when normative behaviors become unquestioned. This progression aligns with Lickona's (2024) moral development arc: from knowing, recognizing kindness as a religious rule, to feeling an initial discomfort fading to emotional neutrality, and to acting without prompting. The case affirms the efficacy of religious culture reconstruction, wherein repeated, spiritually framed practice fuses moral identity with instinctive behavior, demonstrating that, over time, kindness becomes not just taught, but lived. In addition, the student mentioned:

*"We start every day with 5S. I used to roll my eyes at 'smiling at everyone,' but now I notice when classmates look sad. I ask, 'Apa yang bisa saya bantu?' (What can I do to help?) without even trying. It's like my heart knows what to do."*

This student testimony illustrates the embodied internalization of compassion through the 5S program's ritual repetition, marking a transformation from performative compliance "*rolled my eyes*" to intuitive pro-sociality "*my heart knows what to do*". This progression unfolds across three dimensions. First, perceptual habitus (Bourdieu) emerges as daily smiling practices reshape the student's social awareness, enabling unconscious sensitivity to peers' emotional cues. Second, moral automatization (Lickona) is evident as the question "*Apa yang bisa saya bantu?*" arises spontaneously, demonstrating the full arc of knowing and understanding 5S as religious adab, feeling empathizing with sad classmates, and doing (autonomous acts of help). Third, this response reflects Qalb-based

epistemology, where compassion stems from spiritual intuition (“my heart knows”), embodying Tarbiyah as internalized moral intelligence (Khulashah, 2023). The student’s shift from skepticism to uncalculated care confirms that religious culture reconstruction fosters pre-reflective virtue, transforming mechanical routines into lived *Rahmah*. In doing so, externally imposed norms evolve into instinctive ethical responses, achieving the Prophetic model of character transmission—where one not only understands but lives the teaching. Here, compassion is no longer an act to perform, but an extension of being.

### 3.4. *The Integrating Bourdieu and Lickona Theory on Religious Culture Reconstruction*

The reconstruction of religious culture at MTs MIM Langsa exemplifies a dynamic synergy between Bourdieu’s theory of practice and Lickona’s character education framework, transforming Islamic values into embodied kindness. Daily rituals (5S routines, congregational prayers), weekly practices (infaq, Surah Yasin recitations), and annual programs (*pesantren kilat*, Islamic holiday commemorations) function as habitus-forming mechanisms (Bourdieu, 1977). These repetitive actions internalize kindness as durable dispositions—evident in students’ progression from performative compliance, e.g., initial eye-rolling at greetings, to unconscious virtue “*Terima Kasih becomes automatic.*” The reconstruction of religious culture at MTs MIM Langsa demonstrates how sustained, value-laden practices shape student character through the integration of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological framework and Thomas Lickona’s moral development theory. Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, internalized dispositions shaped by repetitive social experiences, provides a theoretical lens for understanding how continuous engagement with religious practices forms students’ moral instincts. At MTs MIM, practices such as daily greetings, communal prayers, *infaq*, and participation in religious events do not merely instruct students in Islamic values but habituate them through ritual repetition, transforming external obligations into internal virtues. Over time, these repeated actions evolve into unconscious behaviors, validating Bourdieu’s notion that social spaces like madrasahs generate moral *habitus* rooted in Islamic values.

This is where Lickona’s character education theory complements Bourdieu’s sociology. According to Lickona (2015), good character formation involves three stages: *moral knowing* (understanding moral values), *moral feeling* (emotional attachment to these values), and *moral doing* (acting upon them). In the context of MTs MIM Langsa, teachers introduce Islamic concepts such as *adab*, *rahmah*, *sabr*, and *musawwah* as foundational values (Khulashah, 2023). Students first learn the importance of these principles (*knowing*), gradually develop emotional resonance through habituation (*feeling*), and eventually express these values through spontaneous, disciplined behaviors (*doing*). For instance, students no longer greet custodians and peers because they are told to—they do so automatically, signaling moral internalization. Teacher modeling plays a critical role in both Bourdieu’s and Lickona’s frameworks. Teachers at MTs MIM exemplify *adab* through their daily conduct—displaying patience, respect, and kindness to all, regardless of status. This behavior acts as both a structuring structure (Bourdieu, 2020) and a moral example (Lickona, 2024), fostering a hidden curriculum that reconstructs school culture into an ethical ecosystem. As students observe and imitate their teachers, they not only absorb religious teachings but enact them in ways that reflect spiritual and emotional maturity. The transformation of “eye-rolling” at rules into “automatic” prosocial behavior evidences this internalization, where virtue becomes second nature. Moreover, Bourdieu’s concepts of *capital* and *domain* further contextualize how religious culture is reconstructed at MTs MIM. Social capital is developed through participation in religious and communal activities, fostering relationships based on mutual respect. Cultural capital emerges through students’ growing religious literacy and participation in activities like *muhadharah*, *tahfidz*, and *pesantren kilat*. Symbolic capital is accrued as students gain recognition for exemplary conduct, both in school and at home. These forms of capital circulate within the educational *domain*, where students compete for acknowledgment and moral standing, reinforcing ethical conduct as a valued norm.

To ensure continuity between school and home environments, MTs MIM involves parents through meetings, parenting seminars, and digital dakwah initiatives. This extended domain helps reinforce religious values beyond the school walls, ensuring that internalized kindness is consistently practiced. Actually, both researchers, Fathurrohman, M (2016) and Huang X (2024) argue, character is shaped not only by knowledge but through modeling, habituation, and consistent reinforcement across environments. MTs MIM's integration of Bourdieu's and Lickona's theories thus results in a holistic, sustainable model of character education—where kindness becomes both a moral imperative and a lived, embodied reality.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how the reconstruction of religious culture at MTs MIM Langsa transforms kindness from an abstract Islamic value into a lived, embodied practice through systemic habituation, teacher modeling, and institutional reinforcement. The students transition from initial resistance to spontaneous prosocial behavior, reflecting the internalization of values through repetitive action habitus and emotional resonance moral feeling. The integration of teacher modeling, structured rituals, and community engagement underscores the interplay between Islamic epistemologies and sociocultural theories. Teachers serve as moral exemplars, embedding Tarbiyah into daily interactions, while activities like Tahfiz and *pesantren kilat* build cultural and symbolic capital, reinforcing kindness as a socially validated virtue. Parental collaboration and policy alignment further ensure continuity between school and home environments, validating Muallif (2022) and Hanif (2024)'s assertion that character is sustained through cross-contextual reinforcement. This research advances the theory of embodied pedagogy by illustrating how religious practices, when institutionalized through habituation, capital accumulation, and domain validation, transform Islamic ethics into durable dispositions. The findings challenge ritualistic approaches to character education, emphasizing the need for systemic, contextually rooted strategies that align with Sharia-guided principles. For policymakers and educators, the study offers a scalable model: kindness thrives not in isolation but through a synergistic ecosystem of routines, relationships, and institutional validation.

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