

Management of Islamic Character Strengthening thru School Culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening Islamic character is one of the main objectives of education that needs to be systematically implemented thru school culture. The challenges of technological development, social change, and the moral degradation of students demand educational institutions to create a learning environment that can continuously internalize Islamic values. This study aims to analyze the management of strengthening Islamic character thru school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang. The research uses a qualitative approach with a field research type. Data were obtained thru observation, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, the vice principal in charge of student affairs, and Islamic Religious Education teachers as informants. Data analysis was conducted thru stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with triangulation techniques to ensure data validity. The research results show that the strengthening of Islamic character is carried out thru the organization of structured programs, clear task distribution, and coordination among all school members. The implementation of school culture is realized thru religious habituation, teacher role modeling, the integration of Islamic values in the learning process, as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities that support the character formation of students. The success of the program is influenced by the commitment of school leaders, the exemplary behavior of teachers, the consistency of school culture, and collaboration between the school, family, and community, while the influence of social environments, the development of digital technology, and the heterogeneity of family backgrounds pose challenges in its implementation. This research concludes that a school culture managed systematically, consistently, and collaboratively is an effective strategy in strengthening students' Islamic character and supporting the creation of a religious and character-building educational environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that not only aims to develop the intellectual abilities of students but also to shape character, which becomes the main foundation in individual and community life (Fuadhah, 2024). In the perspective of Islamic education, the success of education is measured by the ability of educational institutions to produce students who possess a balance between intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social intelligence (Sulaiman et al., 2018). Therefore, the formation of Islamic character becomes one of the fundamental goals of education, as reflected in the concept of insan kāmīl, which refers to a person who is faithful, pious, possesses noble character, and is capable of making a positive contribution to society. Islamic character education is not only directed toward the mastery of normative values but also toward the process of internalization that can shape the habits and behaviors of students in their daily lives. The development of science, technology, and the

wave of globalization has brought significant changes to the mindset, lifestyle, and behavior of the younger generation. The ease of access to information thru digital media provides various opportunities to enhance the quality of learning, but at the same time, it also presents challenges to the character development of students. Various phenomena such as declining discipline, low social concern, increasing individualistic behavior, social media abuse, and diminishing respect for teachers and parents indicate that character education requires more serious attention. These conditions indicate that the success of education cannot be measured solely by academic achievements, but also by the school's ability to shape students' character based on religious values (Herawati et al., 2025). Islamic education views character (akhlak) as the core of the entire educational process. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that one of the main purposes of his mission was to perfect human character. This principle places character formation as an inseparable part of all educational activities pendidikan (Aula Ramadhani et al., 2025). Therefore, educational institutions have the responsibility to create a learning environment that not only develops cognitive aspects but also builds a culture capable of instilling religious values sustainably. In this context, school management plays an important role in designing, implementing, and evaluating various programs that support the strengthening of Islamic character.

School culture becomes one of the strategic instruments in internalizing Islamic values to students. School culture is a set of values, norms, traditions, habits, and interaction patterns that are agreed upon and consistently practiced by all members of the school. School culture oriented toward Islamic values can be realized thru various forms of habituation, such as the implementation of congregational prayers, Quran recitation, the habit of greeting, maintaining cleanliness as part of the implementation of faith values, the formation of a disciplined attitude, the habit of being honest, and the development of social awareness thru various religious and community activities. Consistent habituation will create an educational environment conducive to the character development of students (Hidayah & Nursikin, 2026). The success of strengthening Islamic character thru school culture is inseparable from the management functions applied by educational institutions. Effective management allows all character strengthening programs to be planned systematically, well-organized, consistently implemented, and continuously evaluated. The planning function serves as the foundation for establishing the vision, mission, goals, and character-building programs. Next, the organizing function ensures a clear division of tasks and responsibilities among all school members. At the implementation stage, all school culture programs are carried out thru learning, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and daily habits (Azmi, 2023). Meanwhile, the functions of supervision and evaluation are carried out to measure the effectiveness of the program and serve as a basis for continuous improvement. Thus, the strengthening of Islamic character is not an incidental program, but rather an integral part of the school management system. SMA Negeri 4 Tualang, as one of the secondary education institutions, is committed to shaping students who are not only excellent in academics but also possess a strong Islamic character. This commitment is realized thru the development of a school culture that integrates religious values into various educational activities. Various religious habituation programs, teacher role modeling, and religious social activities are part of the school's efforts to create an environment that supports the character development of students. However, the implementation of school culture as a medium for character strengthening requires effective management so that each program designed can have a real impact on changing students' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed on how management functions are applied in developing a school culture oriented toward strengthening Islamic character.

Various previous studies have examined character education, school culture, and Islamic education management. However, most of these studies still discuss these three aspects separately, so there has not been much research specifically examining how the process of managing Islamic character strengthening is implemented thru school culture in the context of secondary education

(Saputra et al., 2026). Furthermore, social dynamics and the development of information technology demand a model of school culture management that is more adaptive to contemporary educational challenges without neglecting the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. The gap indicates the need for research that can provide a comprehensive picture of school culture management practices in strengthening the Islamic character of students. In this study, there is something interesting and different from other research, namely the development of a model for strengthening Islamic character management that not only views school culture as a medium for value habituation but also as an integrated managerial system thru the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and continuously evaluating. Unlike previous research, which generally focused on the implementation of character education or the effectiveness of school culture in a partial manner, this study examines how the process of managing school culture is designed, implemented, and evaluated in building the Islamic character of students systematically at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang. Thus, this research offers a conceptual model that integrates educational management principles with Islamic values in shaping a school culture conducive to the internalization of morals, spirituality, discipline, responsibility, and exemplary behavior among school members, thereby serving as a reference for the development of Islamic character education management in secondary schools. Based on the aforementioned description, this research is important for deeply analyzing the processes of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the strengthening of Islamic character thru school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic education management studies, as well as practical recommendations for schools in developing an effective school culture as a means of shaping students' character to be religious, have integrity, be disciplined, responsible, and able to face the challenges of modern life without losing Islamic values.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with field research to gain an in-depth understanding of the management of Islamic character strengthening thru school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang, Siak Regency (Suwendra, 2018). The research informants were selected thru purposive sampling because they were directly involved in the implementation of the Islamic character strengthening program, which consisted of the school principal, the vice principal for student affairs, Islamic Education teachers, and students. Data collection was carried out over four months thru observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies of various school cultural programs. Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification until research themes regarding management implementation, Islamic character strengthening strategies, and supporting and inhibiting factors for its implementation were obtained. To ensure trustworthiness, the research applies source and technique triangulation, member checking, and audit trails so that the process of data analysis and interpretation can be accountable and have a good level of credibility (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Organization of the Islamic Character Strengthening Program

The research results show that the organization of the Islamic character strengthening program at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is carried out thru the clear distribution of tasks, authority, and responsibilities to all school members. The organization aims to ensure that every program related to the character development of students can run in a directed, coordinated, and sustainable manner. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, the principal acts as the policy maker and the main responsible party, while the vice principal for student affairs is tasked with

coordinating the implementation of the program. Islamic Religious Education teachers and all teachers play the role of implementers who integrate Islamic character values into both learning activities and school culture. Based on the interview with Mrs. Hermayanti, the Head of SMA Negeri 4 Tualang, it was found that the organization of the Islamic character strengthening program begins with the preparation of the school work program at the beginning of the academic year. The program was developed thru a coordination meeting involving school leadership, teachers, and educational staff. According to him, the success of character formation in students is not only the responsibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers but also the responsibility of the entire school community. Therefore, each teacher is assigned the task of being a role model while also monitoring the character development of students thru habits applied in daily school life. Furthermore, Mrs. Hermayanti explained that the school has established a coordination pattern that allows each character program to run synergistically. The principal is responsible for planning and supervising all programs, while the implementation of activities is coordinated by the vice principal for student affairs together with Islamic Religious Education teachers, class advisors, and student organization supervisors. According to him, the coordination system facilitates the school in monitoring the implementation of a school culture oriented toward the formation of Islamic character. This finding is in line with Mulyasa's opinion, which states that organization in educational management is the process of distributing tasks, authority, and responsibilities to all components of the school so that educational goals can be achieved effectively (Mulyasa, 2022). In line with this, Lickona emphasizes that character education will run optimally if all school members are involved as a moral community, which is a community that collectively builds exemplary behavior, habituation, and supervision of students' character development (Mahmudah & Kom, 2026). Thus, the organization involving all elements of the school shows that the strengthening of Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is carried out thru structured institutional collaboration, so that Islamic values are not only taught in learning but also internalized thru the school culture in a sustainable manner.

Mr. Muslim, as the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs, indicated that the implementation of the character program involves various elements of the school thru the established division of tasks. He explained that the student affairs department is responsible for coordinating various religious habituation activities, religious extracurricular activities, and the discipline development of students. Each activity has a responsible teacher so that its implementation can proceed effectively. In addition, student organizations such as the Student Council (OSIS) and Islamic Spirituality (Rohis) are also empowered to help organize religious activities as part of character building for the students. According to Mr. Muslim, coordination among teachers is conducted regularly thru evaluation meetings and daily communication to ensure that all programs run according to the established objectives. Each class teacher is also given the responsibility to monitor the behavioral development of students in their respective classes and report any issues requiring follow-up to the student affairs department. The mechanism shows that program organization is not only oriented toward task distribution but also building a continuous coordination system. Meanwhile, the results of the interview with Mrs. Veni Sofia, an Islamic Religious Education teacher, show that PAI teachers have a strategic role in implementing the Islamic character strengthening program thru learning and habituation. She explained that character values are not only conveyed thru lesson materials but are also integrated into every learning process thru exemplary behavior, giving advice, habituation of worship, and moral development of students. Additionally, PAI teachers collaborate with homeroom teachers and other subject teachers to ensure that religious values are consistently applied in all school activities. Mrs. Veni Sofia also conveyed that the success of the character strengthening program is greatly influenced by the cooperation among teachers. According to her, character building will not succeed if it is only carried out by one party, but requires the commitment of all educators to set a good example for the students. Therefore, communication and coordination among

school members are important parts in supporting the creation of a religious and conducive school culture. This view aligns with Lickona's concept of character education, which states that effective character formation is not only carried out thru the learning process in the classroom but also thru modeling, habituation, and the creation of a moral community that involves all school members. Furthermore, Koesoema (2020) explains that school culture is an educational environment that functions to internalize character values thru social interactions, habits, and cooperation among all school members (Mahmudah & Kom, 2026). Therefore, the collaboration between Islamic Religious Education teachers, class advisors, subject teachers, and student organizations at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang demonstrates that the strengthening of Islamic character is implemented in an integrated manner thru a school culture built collectively and sustainably. Based on the results of the interviews with the three informants, it can be concluded that the organization of the Islamic character strengthening program at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang has been carried out thru clear task distribution, structured coordination, and collaboration between the principal, vice principal for student affairs, Islamic Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and all school members. The systematic organization allows each school culture program to run effectively and sustainably, thereby supporting the process of internalizing Islamic values among students.

3.2 Implementation of School Culture in Strengthening Islamic Character

The implementation of school culture as a strategy for strengthening Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is carried out systematically thru the integration of Islamic values in intramural, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, as well as various forms of habituation that become the daily culture within the school environment. The implementation is not only oriented toward enhancing students' religious understanding but also aimed at fostering religious attitudes, discipline, responsibility, honesty, social concern, and mutual respect. The school culture is developed as a learning environment that can encourage the internalization of Islamic values thru real experiences and the exemplary behavior of all school members. Based on an interview with Mrs. Veni Sofia, an Islamic Religious Education Teacher, the implementation of school culture is integrated into the Islamic Religious Education learning process. Each learning material is linked to the realities of the students' lives so that Islamic values do not stop at the cognitive aspect but are manifested in daily behavior. Learning begins with a joint prayer and the recitation of the holy verses of the Qur'an according to the schedule set by the school. In addition, teachers consistently provide reinforcement thru exemplary behavior, learning reflections, giving advice, and instilling habits of discipline, honesty, and responsibility throughout the learning process. According to her, the success of Islamic character formation is greatly influenced by the consistency of teachers in providing good behavioral examples to students. Furthermore, Mrs. Veni Sofia explained that character development is also carried out thru a personal approach to the students. When behavior that does not align with Islamic values is found, teachers do not just give reprimands, but also conduct persuasive guidance thru dialog and mentoring. The approach aims for students to understand the meaning of each value applied and to be able to consciously implement it in their daily lives, both in the school environment and outside of it. These findings reinforce the views of Berkowitz and Bier, who state that effective character education cannot be achieved merely thru the delivery of material, but must be integrated into the entire learning process thru teacher modeling, the habituation of positive behaviors, and meaningful interactions between teachers and students (Kusuma et al., 2025). Thus, it can be said that the transformation of school culture will be successful if teachers act as change agents who consistently build a learning environment that fosters values, character, and social responsibility among students. In the perspective of Islamic education, Muhaimin also explains that the internalization of Islamic values will occur optimally if the learning process is not only oriented toward the mastery of knowledge but also emphasizes exemplary behavior, habituation, guidance,

and continuous mentoring (Sari et al., 2021).. Thus, the implementation of school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang shows that the strengthening of Islamic character is carried out thru the integration of learning, teacher role modeling, and personal development so that Islamic values can be fully internalized in the students' lives.

This statement is reinforced by Mr. Muslim, the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs, who explained that the implementation of school culture does not only focus on religious activities but is also realized thru the cultivation of discipline and the habituation of positive behavior. The student affairs department coordinates various programs that support character development, such as the habit of being punctual, dressing according to school regulations, maintaining environmental cleanliness, respecting teachers and fellow students, as well as fostering a culture of queuing and responsibility in every school activity. All of these programs are monitored regularly by the duty teacher, class advisor, and student affairs team to ensure their consistent implementation. Mr. Muslim also stated that the school provides space for students to develop their character thru organizational and extracurricular activities, particularly Islamic Spirituality (Rohis). Various activities such as Islamic studies, commemoration of Islamic holidays, social service, Friday donations, and Islamic leadership training serve as media for students to develop religious values, social awareness, cooperation, and leadership spirit. According to him, the active involvement of students in these activities provides direct experience in implementing Islamic values in the school environment. That view aligns with the explanation from Mrs. Hermayanti, the Principal of SMA Negeri 4 Tualang, who emphasized that school culture is an integral part of the educational system at the school. All habituation programs are designed to become routines consistently practiced by all members of the school community. The forms of habituation include the culture of greeting, smiling, and saying hello, shaking hands with teachers before entering the classroom, praying together before and after lessons, reciting the Quran, performing the congregational Zuhr prayer, Friday donations, and various religious activities conducted regularly. According to her, the consistency in program implementation is an important factor in shaping the Islamic character of students because character is not formed thru incidental activities, but rather thru continuous habituation. Mrs. Hermayanti also emphasized that the exemplary behavior of all educators is an inseparable aspect of the implementation of school culture. Teachers and educational staff are required to display behaviors that reflect Islamic values, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, politeness, and care for students. That exemplary behavior becomes an effective means in the process of character internalization because students receive real-life examples that can be observed and imitated in their daily lives. Muhaimin explains that character education from an Islamic perspective is built thru the processes of habituation (*ta'wid*), exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*), and the creation of a conducive educational environment so that Islamic values can be internalized into the daily habits of students (Sari et al., 2021). In line with that, Suyadi emphasized that a school culture implemented consistently will create an educational ecosystem capable of integrating religious, moral, and social aspects into the daily lives of students (Furkan, 2013). Therefore, the implementation of school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang shows that the consistency of habituation and exemplary behavior of all school members is the main factor in building the Islamic character of students sustainably.

Observations conducted during the research show that the school culture has become part of the routine activities of the school community. Before the learning activities begin, the students perform a group prayer and recite the Quran according to the schedule. Interaction between teachers and students is conducted by prioritizing the culture of greetings, smiles, and salutations, while the implementation of congregational Zuhr prayers is followed orderly by all school members. In addition, students show concern for the cleanliness of the school environment thru scheduled class duties and community service activities. This condition shows that religious values have been internalized into the school culture thru consistent habituation. School documentation also shows

that the implementation of school culture is supported by various structured programs, such as the Quran recitation schedule, congregational prayer program, Friday donation activities, Ramadan boarding school, Islamic holiday celebrations, and Islamic Spirituality (Rohis) activities. All of these programs serve as instruments in building a religious educational environment while simultaneously strengthening the character formation of the students. Based on these findings, the implementation of school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang shows an integration between learning, habituation, exemplary behavior, student activities, and religious activities as a unified whole in strengthening Islamic character. The synergy among all school members makes the school culture not just an institutional routine, but a mechanism for character formation that occurs continuously, allowing religious values to be internalized in the attitudes and behaviors of the students.

3.3 Factors Influencing the Strengthening of Islamic Character

The strengthening of Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is influenced by various interrelated factors, both from the internal school environment and from the external environment of the students. These factors contribute to the effectiveness of implementing school culture as a medium for the internalization of Islamic values. Based on the results of data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation, several supporting factors were found that strengthen the implementation of the program, as well as inhibiting factors that pose challenges in character development for the students. Based on an interview with Mr. Muslim, the success of strengthening Islamic character is greatly influenced by the consistency in implementing school culture, which has become part of the students' daily activities. According to him, various habituation programs such as the culture of greeting, group prayers, Quran recitation, congregational Zuhur prayers, Friday donations, and the implementation of school discipline provide students with the opportunity to consistently practice Islamic values. In addition, good coordination between teachers, homeroom teachers, and the student affairs department is an important factor in ensuring that all programs can run according to the established goals. Mr. Muslim also explained that student involvement in various organizational and religious extracurricular activities positively influences character development. Through Islamic Spiritual Activities (Rohis), social service, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and various leadership activities, students gain direct experience in developing attitudes of responsibility, cooperation, social concern, and leadership based on Islamic values. However, he stated that the influence of social environments outside of school and the uncontrolled use of digital media still pose challenges that affect the behavior of some students. These findings reinforce Doni Koesoema A.'s view that school culture is the main instrument in building students' character through habituation, active involvement in various school activities, and the creation of a learning environment consistent with the values instilled (Qomaruzzaman, 2012). In line with that, Maragustam emphasizes that the formation of Islamic character is not sufficient through the delivery of religious material alone, but must be realized through the processes of habituation, exemplary behavior, motivation, and strengthening the educational environment that supports the internalization of Islamic values (Siregar, 2015). Additionally, Asmani explained that the success of character education is greatly influenced by the synergy of all school members in managing habituation programs sustainably, as well as the collaboration between schools, families, and communities (Rarasati et al., 2025). Therefore, the success of strengthening Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang shows that the consistency of school culture, the active involvement of students in various religious activities, and the cooperation of all school members are important factors in shaping Islamic character. On the other hand, challenges arising from social environments and the use of digital media indicate that character strengthening requires continuous support from families and communities so that the Islamic values instilled in schools are maintained in daily life.

That view aligns with the statement of Mrs. Veni Sofia, who emphasized that the success of strengthening Islamic character greatly depends on the exemplary behavior of teachers. According to her, teachers have the responsibility to set an example in applying Islamic values thru discipline, honesty, responsibility, politeness, and care for their students. The example set by teachers is considered more effective than the theoretical delivery of material because students tend to imitate behaviors they see directly in their daily lives. Furthermore, Mrs. Veni Sofia explained that family conditions also have a significant impact on the character formation of students. Students who receive religious practice, supervision, and character education from their family environment generally find it easier to adapt to the religious culture implemented in school. Conversely, students who receive less parental guidance require more intensive training to optimally internalize Islamic values. In line with the two informants, Mrs. Hermayanti stated that the success of strengthening Islamic character is the result of the synergy of all school members. The commitment of school leaders, teachers, educational staff, students, the school committee, and parental support are the main factors in creating a religious school culture. According to her, all the habituation programs that have been designed will not yield optimal results if they are not supported by consistent implementation and cooperation from all school elements. Mrs. Hermayanti also explained that the development of information technology, changes in adolescent social interactions, and the heterogeneity of students' social backgrounds pose unavoidable challenges in character formation. Therefore, the school continues to strive to strengthen communication with parents, enhance guidance thru religious activities, and develop a school culture that is adaptive to the times without neglecting Islamic values as the main foundation of character education. In line with Syaiful Sagala's opinion, which states that the success of school management is not only determined by the principal's ability to perform administrative functions but also by their capacity to build collaboration, communication, and commitment among all school stakeholders. The principal plays a role as a leader who integrates the vision, values, and organizational culture into every school program, so that all teachers, educational staff, students, and parents share the same responsibility in achieving educational goals (Sirait, 2021). In the context of this research, the synergy built thru coordination among teachers, involvement of the school committee, and parental support shows that the strengthening of Islamic character is carried out as a collective responsibility, not just the task of Islamic Religious Education teachers. Furthermore, Jejen Musfah explained that character education will develop optimally if schools can build strong partnerships with families and communities as part of the educational ecosystem. Schools function as the main drivers in instilling character values, while families play a role in reinforcing habits thru supervision, role modeling, and guidance in the home environment. The community also contributes by providing a social environment that supports the moral development of students (Musfah, 2018). Therefore, intensive communication between the school and parents, as well as the involvement of various parties in supporting school cultural programs, become important factors in maintaining the consistency of Islamic value internalization so that the character of students is continuously formed in the school, family, and community environments. Observations during the research indicate that various school cultural programs have been consistently implemented and have become part of the habits of the school community. The activities of Quran recitation, congregational prayers, Friday donations, greeting culture, and the habit of maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment are carried out regularly with good participation from the students. Nevertheless, there are still some students who require further guidance, especially in terms of discipline and consistency in applying Islamic values outside the school environment. Based on the overall findings, the factors influencing the strengthening of Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang consist of supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include the commitment of all school members, the exemplary behavior of teachers, the consistency of school culture, religious habituation programs, and collaboration between the school and families. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include the influence of social

environments, the development of digital media, the heterogeneity of family backgrounds, and the suboptimal involvement of some parents in character development. These findings indicate that the success of strengthening Islamic character requires continuous cooperation between schools, families, and communities so that the process of internalizing Islamic values can proceed optimally.

DISCUSSION

The research results show that the management of Islamic character strengthening thru school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang has been systematically implemented thru a structured organization process, continuous school culture implementation, and support from various internal and external factors that influence each other. The findings show that the strengthening of Islamic character is not implemented as an incidental program, but has become part of the school management system that is integrated with all educational activities. This condition shows that the school culture functions as a strategic medium in internalizing Islamic values to students thru habituation, exemplary behavior, and cooperation among all school members. The organization of the program carried out by SMA Negeri 4 Tualang shows a clear division of tasks, authority, and responsibilities among the principal, vice principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, class advisors, subject teachers, and student organizations. The division of roles allows each character development program to run in a directed, coordinated, and sustainable manner. while simultaneously strengthening the supervision of character program implementation in the school environment. From a management perspective, this condition reflects the implementation of the organizing function as proposed by George R. Terry, which is the process of grouping activities, establishing work relationships, and distributing responsibilities so that organizational goals can be achieved effectively. The clarity of the organizational structure facilitates the implementation of coordination (Wijayanti & Wicaksana, 2023). In the perspective of Islamic education management, organization is not only understood as the administrative division of tasks but also as the implementation of the values of trust, deliberation, responsibility, and cooperation (ta'awun) in achieving educational goals (Patimah et al., 2026). Research findings indicate that coordination among teachers is carried out continuously thru evaluation meetings, informal communication, and collaboration in monitoring student development. This coordination pattern shows that all educators share the same commitment to shaping Islamic character, making character education not only the responsibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers but also a collective responsibility of the entire school community. These findings reinforce the view that the success of character education is greatly determined by an organizational culture that can build synergy among human resources within the school environment..

The strengthening of Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is also realized thru the implementation of a school culture that is integrated into all educational activities. The culture of greeting, smiling, and saying hello, reciting prayers before and after lessons, Quran recitation, congregational Zuhur prayers, Friday donations, Ramadan boarding schools, and various Islamic Spirituality (Rohis) activities demonstrate that the school is building a religious learning environment thru consistent habituation. These programs not only aim to enhance students' religious knowledge but also to cultivate habits that reflect religious values, discipline, responsibility, social concern, and noble character. Thus, the school culture serves as a medium for value internalization, allowing students to learn thru real-life experiences in their daily lives. These findings align with the concept of Islamic education, which places the method of habituation (ta'wid) as one of the main approaches in character formation. According to Al-Ghazali, character is not formed instantly, but develops thru continuous practice and habituation until it becomes part of a person's personality (Fauzan & Albab, 2026). Therefore, the consistency in implementing school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is a form of implementing the Islamic education concept that emphasizes the importance of continuity in building students' character. Islamic values are not only taught in the form of theory but are also

presented in the practice of school life, so that students gain direct experience of how these values are applied in daily life. In addition to habituation, this research shows that the exemplary behavior of teachers plays a very important role in the process of strengthening Islamic character. Teachers not only function as deliverers of learning material but also as figures who serve as examples in attitude, speech, behavior, and interaction with students. The exemplary behavior demonstrated thru discipline, honesty, responsibility, politeness, and care has a greater influence compared to the theoretical delivery of material. This finding is in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that individuals learn behavior thru the process of observing models that are considered to have authority. In the perspective of Islamic education, the concept of *uswah hasanah* places educators as the primary role models who serve as the most effective medium in shaping the morals of students (Azhari & Jailani, 2025). The implementation of school culture also shows the integration between intramural, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. Islamic Religious Education is integrated with character building thru reflection, giving advice, and personal approaches to students. Meanwhile, Islamic Spiritual Activities (Rohis), social service, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and leadership training provide students with opportunities to implement Islamic values in social life. The integration shows that character building does not only take place in the classroom but is also reinforced thru various activities that provide students with direct experiences in applying religious values, leadership, social care, and responsibility.

The success of the implementation of that school culture is not without various influencing factors. This study found that the commitment of school leaders, the exemplary behavior of teachers, the consistency in implementing habituation programs, coordination among teachers, and collaboration between the school and families are the main supporting factors in strengthening Islamic character. That commitment creates a conducive educational environment so that all school members share the same responsibility in internalizing Islamic values to the students. This condition shows that character education will be more effective if supported by a strong organizational culture and leadership capable of fostering cooperation among all school members. On the other hand, research also shows that there are several factors that pose challenges in the implementation of strengthening Islamic character, including the heterogeneity of family backgrounds, the influence of social environments, and the development of digital technology. Technological advancements provide very broad access to various information that is not entirely in line with Islamic values, potentially influencing students' behavior. Furthermore, differences in parenting styles and habits within the family environment result in varying levels of success in character internalization among each student. The findings indicate that schools cannot work alone in shaping students' character; rather, they require support and active involvement from families and the community. The findings of this research align with Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory, which explains that individual development is influenced by interactions within various environments, ranging from family, school, to society. In the context of character education, the success of shaping students' morals is the result of the synergy between these three environments (Maulani, 2026). Therefore, the communication and collaboration established by SMA Negeri 4 Tualang with parents become a strategic step to maintain the sustainability of character development outside the school environment. Overall, the research results show that the strengthening of Islamic character thru school culture at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang has been effective because it is supported by a structured management system, a religious school culture, exemplary educators, and collaboration among all educational stakeholders. This research emphasizes that school culture is not merely a collection of institutional routines, but a value system consciously built to shape students' character. Thus, the success of strengthening Islamic character is not only determined by the number of religious programs implemented but more by the consistency of implementation, the quality of exemplary behavior, the

effectiveness of organization, and the synergy between schools, families, and communities in creating an educational environment that supports the formation of students with noble character.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the strengthening of Islamic character at SMA Negeri 4 Tualang is carried out thru planned, organized, and sustainable school culture management. The organization of the program is carried out thru task division, coordination, and collaboration involving all school members, making character formation a collective responsibility. The implementation of school culture is realized thru religious habituation, teacher exemplification, integration of Islamic values in learning, as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities that support the internalization of Islamic values in the students' lives. The success of strengthening Islamic character is influenced by the commitment of school leaders, the consistency of implementing school culture, the exemplary behavior of teachers, and the synergy between the school, family, and community, while the influence of social environment, the development of digital technology, and the diversity of family backgrounds remain challenges in the formation process. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Islamic education management studies by emphasizing that school culture not only serves as a medium for habituation but also as a managerial instrument that integrates the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating in strengthening Islamic character. Practically, the findings of this research can serve as a reference for school principals, teachers, and educational stakeholders in designing character strengthening policies based on school culture that involve the entire school community and strengthen partnerships with families and the community. This research still has limitations because it was conducted in one school using a qualitative approach, so the findings obtained cannot yet be generalized to different school contexts. Therefore, subsequent research is recommended to involve more educational units with diverse characteristics, using a mixed methods approach or comparative studies, and to examine the effectiveness of the school culture management model in strengthening Islamic character at various educational levels in the era of digital transformation.

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