



INTEGRATING THOMAS LICKONA'S CHARACTER EDUCATION THEORY THROUGH THE BTQ PROGRAM: STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS CHARACTER IN ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract :

This study aims to describe the implementation of the Qur'anic Reading and Writing Program (Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an/BTQ) in shaping students' religious character at MI Al-Azhar Sambongdukuh Jombang. The study employed a qualitative approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that the BTQ program was implemented through habituation in reading and memorizing the Qur'an, teachers' role modeling, and continuous guidance integrated into daily school activities. Through these activities, students showed improvement in their ability to read and write the Qur'an, while also developing disciplined, responsible, patient, and respectful attitudes toward teachers and their surrounding environment. The findings further indicate that the BTQ program is closely aligned with Thomas Lickona's character education theory, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in character formation. Students not only understood religious values cognitively, but also began to develop a love for reading the Qur'an and applying its values in their daily lives. However, the implementation of the program still faced several challenges, including differences in students' abilities, limited instructional time, and insufficient parental assistance at home. Therefore, stronger collaboration between the madrasah and parents is needed to ensure that the development of students' religious character can be carried out optimally and sustainably.

Keywords: *BTQ, Religious Character, Religious Habituation, Islamic Education, Islamic Elementary School*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi program Baca Tulis Al-Qur'an (BTQ) dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa di

MI Al-Azhar Sambongdukuh Jombang. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program BTQ dilaksanakan melalui pembiasaan membaca dan menghafal Al-Qur'an, keteladanan guru, serta bimbingan yang dilakukan secara rutin dalam kegiatan sekolah. Melalui kegiatan tersebut, siswa mengalami peningkatan kemampuan membaca dan menulis Al-Qur'an, serta mulai terbiasa bersikap disiplin, bertanggung jawab, sabar, dan menghormati guru maupun lingkungan sekitar. Temuan penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa program BTQ sejalan dengan teori pendidikan karakter Thomas Lickona yang menekankan pentingnya *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, dan *moral action* dalam pembentukan karakter. Siswa memahami nilai religius dan mulai mencintai membaca al-Qur'an dan menerapkannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Meskipun demikian, pelaksanaan program masih menghadapi beberapa kendala, seperti perbedaan kemampuan siswa, keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran, dan kurangnya pendampingan orang tua di rumah. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan kerja sama yang lebih kuat antara madrasah dan orang tua agar pembentukan karakter religius siswa dapat berlangsung secara optimal dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *BTQ, Karakter Religius, Pembiasaan Religius, Pendidikan Islam, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping human resources that are not only intellectually superior but also possess strong moral and spiritual character. In the context of Islamic education, the development of religious character is a fundamental goal because it relates to the internalization of Islamic values in students' attitudes, behaviors, and daily lives. Religious character reflects not only adherence to religious teachings but also encompasses moral values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, social concern, and respect for others. Strengthening religious character has become increasingly important amidst the challenges of modernization and technological advancements that impact changes in the behavior of the younger generation. Various phenomena indicate a decline in religious character among students, such as low discipline, weak sense of responsibility, declining social etiquette, and a lack of awareness in consistently performing religious duties (Hidayah et al., 2024). This situation indicates that the process of internalizing religious values in education has not been optimal and still tends to focus on cognitive aspects rather than the formation of attitudes and the cultivation of religious.

The development of digital technology, the tide of globalization, and changes in patterns of social interaction have also influenced students' behavioral patterns, which are increasingly drifting away from religious values. This situation indicates that religious character education has not yet been fully and optimally internalized in educational practices at schools. In many cases, religious education still tends to be oriented toward the transfer of religious knowledge and has not yet addressed the aspects of habit formation and religious

experiences that shape students' actual behavior. In recent years, the issue of moral degradation and the weakening of religious character among students has become a serious concern in the world of education. Phenomena such as low discipline, increasing rude behavior, weak sense of responsibility, low awareness of worship, and a lack of respect for teachers and the environment indicate a character crisis among the younger.

Religious character consists of attitudes and behaviors that reflect an individual's adherence to the values and teachings of the religion they believe in. In Islamic education, religious character is manifested through habits of worship, honesty, discipline, responsibility, social concern, politeness, and respect for fellow human beings. These values serve as a crucial foundation in shaping students' personalities so they can lead a balanced life in their relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the environment. Rahmawati and Putri (2023) explain that religious character is not merely about religious rituals but also concerns the development of morality and social ethics in daily life. Thus, the development of religious character requires an educational process that is not merely theoretical but also encompasses the dimensions of experience, habit formation, and exemplary behavior within the educational environment (Rahmawati & Putri, 2023).

The importance of religious character development becomes even more critical when applied to elementary school-aged children. During this phase, children are in a developmental stage where they are highly receptive to absorbing, imitating, and internalizing values from their surroundings. Psychologically, the elementary school years are often referred to as the golden age for habit and character formation because children possess a high capacity to imitate behaviors they observe and experience (Nabila, 2023). Therefore, religious character education must be instilled early on through consistent practice and enjoyable learning experiences. If religious values are successfully internalized from a young age, they will become more deeply ingrained and an integral part of the student's behavior into adulthood. Conversely, failing to establish a foundation of religious character in the early stages of education can lead to weak moral and spiritual self-control in the child's future.

The formation of religious character cannot be achieved instantly through the mere delivery of instructional content. Character is formed through a lengthy process involving habit formation, modeling, environmental reinforcement, and direct experiences carried out repeatedly and continuously. From Thomas Lickona's perspective, character education encompasses three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which must operate in an integrated manner so that moral values can be fully internalized within students. This indicates that the success of religious character education requires learning strategies that not only teach religious values conceptually but also provide space for students to experience, internalize, and practice these values in their daily lives. Thus, the school environment bears a significant responsibility in fostering a religious culture capable of supporting the continuous development of students' character.

One form of implementing religious education in Islamic elementary schools is through the Qur'an Reading and Writing (BTQ) program. The BTQ program is a learning activity focused on the skills of reading, writing, memorizing, and understanding the fundamentals of the Qur'an as part of students' Islamic education. In practice, the BTQ program aims not only to improve Qur'anic literacy but also has the potential to serve as a medium for fostering religious habits that shape students' behavior and character. Activities such as regularly reading the Qur'an, praying together, memorizing short surahs, and reciting the Asmaul Husna can foster spiritual habits that influence the development of discipline, responsibility, and a love for the Qur'an. Given its habit-forming nature, the BTQ program holds strong relevance in supporting religious character education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

Several previous studies indicate that the BTQ program makes a positive contribution to the development of students' religious aspects. A study by Aisyah (2021) found that BTQ activities can instill discipline and a sense of responsibility through the habit-forming practice of structured religious activities (Aisyah, 2021). Another study conducted by Yusnani (2024) shows that the sorogan method in BTQ instruction effectively improves students' ability to read and write the Qur'an through an individualized approach and direct guidance from teachers (Yusnani, 2024). Additionally, Ramadina (2022) explains that the use of the tartil method in BTQ instruction significantly improves students' fluency in reading the Qur'an (Ramadina, 2022). These findings indicate that the BTQ program holds great potential in supporting religious education, particularly regarding Qur'anic literacy skills and the development of students' disciplinary attitudes.

On the other hand, research on religious character formation has primarily focused on the influence of school culture, religious extracurricular activities, and the general practice of worship. Pratama (2023) explains that a religious school culture, fostered through the practice of congregational prayer, communal prayer, and routine religious activities, can shape students' religious character (Pratama, 2023). Additionally, Koreeyoh Cheloh found that religious activities in schools influence improvements in students' polite behavior, social concern, and awareness of worship. However, these studies have not specifically examined the BTQ program as the primary instrument in the formation of students' religious character (Cheloh, 2023). However, these studies have not specifically examined the BTQ program as the primary means for religious character formation. This indicates a research gap, namely the absence of studies linking the BTQ program to the comprehensive development of religious character, particularly at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

Based on this description, research on the Al-Qur'an Reading and Writing (BTQ) program in the religious character formation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students is important and relevant to conduct. This study not only seeks to examine BTQ as a program to improve Quran reading skills but also analyzes how strategies for religious habit formation, teacher role modeling, personal motivation, supervision, and cooperation between the school and parents can shape students' religious character in a sustainable manner. The focus of the

study on second-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al Azhar Jombang was chosen because at this stage, students are in the early phase of habit and character formation, which is crucial for their moral development in the future. This study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of character education studies in Islamic education while also serving as a practical reference for Islamic elementary schools in optimizing the BTQ program as a medium for the internalization of religious values and the formation of students' Islamic character.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted at MI Al Azhar Jombang, as this institution consistently implements the Quran Reading and Writing (BTQ) program as part of its efforts to shape students' religious character. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through indepth interviews and direct observations of the school principal, BTQ teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from school documents, such as the BTQ activity schedule, monitoring logs, activity reports, and photographic documentation. Data collection techniques included interviews, participatory observation, and documentation to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data regarding the implementation of the BTQ program and the development of students' religious (Sugiyono, 2018).

Table 1. Research Informant Data and Data Obtained

No	Initials	Position	Data
1	A.S	Head of the madrasah	Implementation of the BTQ program, the impact of the BTQ program on students' religious character, support for BTQ facilities and infrastructure, cooperation with parents
2	I.K	Curriculum Vice Principal and BTQ Teacher	Religious socialization strategies, teacher modeling strategies, motivation and personalized approach strategies, monitoring and evaluation strategies, BTQ teaching methods, BTQ learning objectives for fostering students' religious character
3	W.H	Homeroom teacher	Changes in students' religious character, student discipline, students' religious practice habits, students' social attitudes and compassion
4	J.A	Students	Implementation of BTQ activities, BTQ learning experiences, habit of reading the Qur'an, parental guidance at home, impact of BTQ on the ability to read the Qur'an

Data analysis was conducted continuously from the start of data collection until the study was completed. The data analysis technique followed the

interactive model by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, as well as drawing conclusions and verification. Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn through a process of data interpretation accompanied by continuous verification to ensure the validity of the research results. Data validity was maintained through triangulation techniques, namely source triangulation and methodological triangulation (Sugiyono, 2018).



Figure 1. Research Stages

FINDINGS

The BTQ program at MI Al Azhar Sambong Dukuh Jombang is a religious program conducted routinely every morning before classes begin, starting in 2021, as a means of fostering students' religious character. These activities include reciting prayers together, chanting the Asmaul Husna, reading and memorizing short surahs, and practicing Quranic recitation according to students' abilities. The BTQ program aims not only to improve students' Quranic reading and writing skills but also to instill the habit of applying religious values in daily life.

Based on observations and interviews with the madrasah principal, the curriculum vice principal, homeroom teachers, and students, several strategies were identified that teachers use to instill religious values such as discipline, responsibility, good manners, diligence in worship, and love for the Qur'an. These strategies are implemented gradually and continuously in every BTQ activity so that students become accustomed to engaging in religious activities in their daily lives. In their implementation, teachers play a crucial role in guiding, directing, and creating a religious and conducive learning environment for students. Through these various strategies, the BTQ program is deemed capable of positively influencing the development of students' religious character both within the madrasah and outside of school.

One strategy used by teachers to shape students' religious character at MI Al Azhar Sambong Dukuh Jombang is the religious habit formation strategy within the BTQ program. This strategy involves accustoming students to perform various religious activities before lessons begin. Based on an interview with the curriculum vice principal, it was stated that BTQ activities are conducted every morning before classes begin, starting with a group prayer, reciting the Asmaul Husna, and then continuing with activities such as reading and memorizing the Qur'an (Interview, curriculum vice principal). Additionally, students are encouraged to write Qur'anic verses according to their individual abilities. These activities are carried out routinely and purposefully as a form of religious habit formation for students.

The implementation of religious habit-forming in the BTQ program is carried out consistently with direct guidance from teachers. The school principal explained that the school provides a special BTQ schedule in the morning so that students are more focused and accustomed to starting their day with religious activities (Interview, school principal). This continuous practice aims to ensure that students develop religious habits that are ingrained in their daily lives, both at school and at home. Additionally, religious habit formation starting in elementary school is considered crucial because students are still in a developmental phase or golden age, so habits instilled early tend to be more easily ingrained and carried into adulthood.

Through this strategy of religious habit formation, a shift in students' religious character is evident. Students have become more disciplined in participating in religious activities, have grown accustomed to reciting prayers before studying, and are more diligent in reading and memorizing the Qur'an. This is reinforced by the statement from the madrasah principal, who noted that the BTQ program has a positive influence on students' character, such as discipline, diligence in worship, and a love for the Qur'an (Interview, madrasah principal). Additionally, interview results with students indicate that they have begun to get into the habit of reading and memorizing short surahs not only at school but also at home (Interview, student). These findings suggest that religious habits formed through routine and sustained practice can gradually shape students' religious behavior. Students have become more accustomed to performing religious activities without needing constant reminders from teachers.

Another strategy teachers use to shape students' religious character is through the teacher's role as a model during BTQ activities. In practice, teachers provide direct examples to students, particularly in reading the Qur'an properly and accurately. The curriculum coordinator stated that, "We demonstrate the correct recitation first, then the students imitate it together" (Interview, curriculum coordinator). Additionally, he explained that, "The activity is conducted using the group recitation method, repeated two to three times for each surah so that students memorize it more quickly" (Interview, Deputy Head

of Curriculum). Teacher role modeling is considered crucial because at the elementary school level, students tend to imitate what they see and hear from their surroundings, especially from teachers who interact directly with them daily at the madrasah.

Through the teacher role-modeling strategy, changes in students' religious character are evident. The madrasah principal stated that, "Students have become more polite and show respect toward teachers and peers" (Interview, madrasah principal). Additionally, the homeroom teacher explained that, "Students are also increasingly reminding one another to pray and maintain cleanliness" (Interview, homeroom teacher). The results of these interviews indicate that the teacher role-modeling strategy in the BTQ program is effective in shaping students' religious character, such as politeness, respect for others, caring for peers, and fostering a love for the Qur'an. Furthermore, students also learn to be patient and diligent in reviewing their recitations and memorization because they observe these traits being directly modeled by teachers during BTQ activities.

Another strategy teachers use to shape students' religious character is through motivation and a personalized approach during BTQ activities. This strategy involves providing attention, encouragement, and an approach tailored to each student's individual circumstances and abilities. The curriculum coordinator stated that, "We provide a personalized approach by frequently offering encouragement without scolding" (Interview, curriculum coordinator). Additionally, he explained that, "Sometimes we incorporate light games or small rewards to keep students motivated" (Interview, curriculum coordinator). These statements indicate that teachers strive to create a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment to make students more enthusiastic about participating in BTQ activities. This play-based learning approach is implemented to prevent students from getting bored during the learning process, making BTQ activities feel more engaging and enjoyable for the students.

Teachers apply a motivational approach by adapting to students' abilities in reading and memorizing the Qur'an so that the learning process does not feel burdensome. Teachers also set light memorization targets appropriate to students' abilities. This is reinforced by a statement noting that, "Every day, students are given an additional two verses to memorize so that the process remains light and not overwhelming" (Interview, Curriculum Coordinator). This approach is implemented to maintain students' enthusiasm and self-confidence in learning the Qur'an. In addition to focusing on academic abilities, teachers also pay attention to students' emotional well-being so that they feel more comfortable and less stressed while participating in BTQ activities.

Through motivational strategies and a personalized approach, a change in the students' religious character has become evident. The homeroom teacher noted that, "There are also students who previously rarely prayed or were not yet fluent in reading the Qur'an, but are now more diligent" (Interview, homeroom teacher). In addition to becoming more diligent in reading the Quran,

students also appear more confident, enthusiastic about participating in BTQ activities, and more consistent in memorization. The humanistic and attentive approach makes students feel comfortable during the learning process, enabling them to perform their religious duties with awareness and voluntary commitment, rather than out of compulsion. Thus, religious values can be gradually instilled in students' daily lives.

In addition to motivational strategies and a personalized approach, teachers also employ monitoring and evaluation strategies in implementing the BTQ program. Monitoring is conducted to track students' progress in reading and memorizing the Qur'an, while evaluation is used to assess students' learning progress on a regular basis. Based on the interview results, the curriculum coordinator stated that, "Evaluation is conducted periodically through direct assessment during reading sessions, as well as by recording progress in the BTQ monitoring book" (Interview, curriculum coordinator). Additionally, the madrasah principal explained that, "The madrasah provides a student progress monitoring book" (Interview, madrasah principal). The provision of these monitoring books is a form of support from the madrasah to optimize the implementation of the BTQ program.

Supervision and evaluation are carried out routinely by recording each student's learning progress. Teachers assess students' reading and memorization skills of the Qur'an and monitor their learning progress throughout the BTQ activities. This is reinforced by the statement that, "Each student has a special notebook used to record their progress" (Interview, curriculum coordinator). The existence of these monitoring books helps teachers track student progress in a more targeted and sustained manner, as each student has different abilities and learning processes. In addition to tracking students' learning progress, consistent monitoring also trains students to be more disciplined, responsible, and steadfast in their Qur'an studies. In fact, students become more enthusiastic and motivated to achieve good results in the BTQ program because they can track the progress they have made.

Another equally important strategy in implementing the BTQ program is fostering collaboration between teachers and parents. This collaboration aims to support students' religious habits not only within the madrasah but also at home. Through this partnership, parents are encouraged to assist their children in reading and memorizing the Qur'an, especially when students have not yet fully grasped the material taught at school. Based on the interview results, the madrasah principal stated that, "The madrasah also encourages parents to support their children's activities at home" (Interview, madrasah principal). This statement indicates that the success of the BTQ program does not solely depend on the role of teachers at school but also requires the support and involvement of parents in guiding students' religious activities at home.

Cooperation between teachers and parents is carried out through guidance and supervision of students' learning activities at home. This is

reinforced by the results of an interview with one of the students who stated that, “At home, I am sometimes accompanied by my mother or father to read the Qur’an” (Interview, student). This guidance helps students become more accustomed to reading the Qur’an and maintains consistency in their daily worship. Additionally, parental involvement motivates students more in learning the Qur’an’s recitation because they receive direct attention and support from their family. Thus, collaboration between teachers and parents is a key factor in supporting the optimal and sustainable development of students’ religious character.

Table 2. Teachers’ Strategies in Shaping Religious Character through the BTQ Program

Teacher Strategies	Forms of BTQ Activities	Religious Character Developed Karakter
Religious Habits	Group prayer, Asmaul Husna, reading and memorizing the Qur’an every morning	Discipline, diligence in worship, love for the Qur’an
Teacher’s Exemplary Behavior	Teachers demonstrate proper recitation and provide direct guidance to students	Good manners, respect for teachers, caring for others
Motivation and a personal approach	Encouragement, rewards, light games, gradual memorization goals	Self-confidence, enthusiasm for learning, consistency in memorization
Supervision and evaluation	Reading assessments, student progress monitoring books	Responsibility, discipline, honesty
Cooperation between teachers and parents	Guidance on reading the Qur’an at home	Spirit of worship, getting used to reciting the Qur’an at home

DISCUSSIONS

Teachers’ strategies in the BTQ program at MI Al Azhar Sambongdukuh are implemented through habit formation, modeling, and guidance integrated into students’ daily activities. These strategies demonstrate that religious character education is not sufficient through knowledge transfer alone but must be realized through continuous and consistent real-life experiences. In the context of elementary education, religious habits such as reading the Qur’an before lessons, memorizing short surahs, and establishing daily prayer routines serve as effective means of internalizing values because children at the MI level are still in the stage of imitative and habitual development. Teachers play a role not only as conveyors of material but also as moral figures who create a religious environment in students’ daily lives. This approach aligns with Thomas Lickona’s perspective, which emphasizes that character education must integrate the dimensions of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions so that

values can be embedded as a way of life (Lickona, 1991). Research by Yusuf and Anwar confirms that religious habit formation conducted repeatedly in elementary schools can strengthen students' discipline, responsibility, and spirituality (Yusuf & Anwar, 2021).

From Thomas Lickona's perspective, the habit-forming strategies in the BTQ program are closely linked to the concept of moral action—the individual's ability to embody moral values in daily behavior (Lickona, 1991). Moral action does not arise spontaneously but is built through continuous practice until it becomes a character trait. When students are accustomed to reading the Qur'an daily, maintaining proper etiquette toward the mushaf, and reciting prayers before and after activities, they are being trained to transform religious values into concrete behavior. In Lickona's theory, moral action is formed through three main components: moral competence, moral will, and moral habit. The BTQ program serves as a medium for developing these three aspects because students are not only taught how to read the Qur'an but are also guided to develop the will to practice it consciously and consistently. Thus, religious habituation functions as a process of forming a moral habitus that strengthens students' religious identity from an early age (Lickona, 1991).

An in-depth examination of Thomas Lickona's theory shows that good character does not stop at an understanding of values, but must be manifested in repeated habits. This perspective has a strong connection to Aristotle's moral philosophy, which states that virtue is formed through habituation—that is, the consistent repetition of good actions (Aristotle & Crisp, 2004). In the BTQ program, the repetition of reading, memorization, and review activities creates patterns of religious behavior that gradually become an integral part of the students' selves. Religious habituation carried out routinely has a significant influence on increasing students' sense of responsibility and compliance with school rules. This indicates that the habituation strategy in BTQ is not merely an administrative routine but a pedagogical process aimed at continuously building students' moral and spiritual structures (Rahman, 2020).

In addition to habit formation, teachers' exemplary behavior is a crucial element in religious character education. In implementing BTQ, teachers do not merely instruct students to read the Qur'an but also demonstrate directly how to recite with proper pronunciation (*tartil*), maintain proper etiquette, and respect the Qur'an. This exemplary behavior exerts a strong influence because elementary school-aged students tend to learn through observation of figures they consider significant in their lives. This aligns with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that individuals learn through modeling, observation, and imitation of others' behavior (Bandura, 1977). When teachers consistently demonstrate religious behavior, students find it easier to imitate and internalize these values compared to merely receiving verbal advice. Research by Putri and Lestari also found that teachers' exemplary behavior has a significant influence on the development of discipline, manners, and religious character in elementary school students (Putri & Lestari, 2022).

Meanwhile, teacher role modeling is not only related to moral action but also to moral feeling. Moral feeling is an emotional aspect that motivates a person

to love moral values and feel compelled to practice them (Lickona, 1991). When teachers demonstrate their love for the Qur'an through respectful attitudes, a gentle voice while reciting, and earnestness in teaching BTQ, students will experience emotional connections that foster a sense of love for religious activities. In other words, students not only understand that reading the Qur'an is important but also feel peace, pride, and comfort while doing so. This emotional aspect is crucial because, according to Lickona, strong character is formed when an individual has an emotional attachment to the moral values they hold. Therefore, the teacher's exemplary behavior serves as a medium for both the transfer of values and the transmission of religious emotions to students.

The guidance and motivation provided by teachers in the BTQ program also reflect the implementation of the "moral knowing" aspect in Thomas Lickona's theory. Moral knowing relates to the ability to understand moral values, the reasons why an action is considered good, and awareness of the moral consequences of specific behaviors. BTQ teachers not only teach techniques for reading the Qur'an but also explain the significance of reading the Qur'an in the life of a Muslim, the importance of maintaining proper etiquette, and the spiritual benefits of memorizing Qur'anic verses. Fauzi and Amin explain that the teacher's role as a guide is crucial in enhancing students' religious understanding and spiritual motivation because students require intensive guidance in the process of internalizing religious values (Fauzi & Amin, 2024).

From Thomas Lickona's perspective, the success of character education occurs when moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action operate in an integrated manner. In the BTQ program, this integration is evident when students understand the importance of reading the Qur'an (moral knowing), develop a sense of love and respect for the Qur'an (moral feeling), and then cultivate the habit of reading and applying it in daily life (moral action). These three aspects are interrelated and inseparable. If students only understand the theory without practicing it, religious values will struggle to become part of their character. Conversely, if there is only routine without understanding and emotional engagement, religious behavior will be mechanical and easily lost. Therefore, the BTQ program, which combines practice, modeling, and guidance, demonstrates a strong alignment with the holistic character education paradigm developed by Lickona (Lickona, 1991).



Figure 2. Integration of Lickona’s Theory into the BTQ Program for Strengthening Student Character

The impact of the BTQ program is evident in changes in student behavior that increasingly reflect religious values in daily life. Students have become more disciplined, have developed the habit of praying, and demonstrate respect for the Qur’an. These changes result from consistent habit formation, as articulated by Aristotle (Aristotle & Crisp, 2004). Additionally, students demonstrate development in moral feelings, such as a growing love for the Qur’an, an awareness of the need to maintain proper conduct, and a respectful attitude toward teachers and the environment (Sari et al., 2024).

The implementation of the BTQ program at MI Al Azhar Sambongdukuh demonstrates that strategies involving habit formation, modeling, and guidance play a significant role in shaping students’ religious character. This approach aligns closely with Thomas Lickona’s theory of character education, which

emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991). Teachers function as moral agents who not only teach values but also create a religious environment that allows students to experience, feel, and practice those values in a tangible way. Support from Albert Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and Aristotle's theory of habituation reinforces that religious character can develop through the repetition of behavior and consistent modeling. Research by Hidayah et al. confirms that education based on religious habituation is effective in shaping students' character to be disciplined, responsible, and spiritually aware (Hidayah et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the BTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an) program at MI Al-Azhar Sambongdukuh Jombang plays a significant role in shaping students' religious character. The BTQ program, implemented integrally through habit formation, role modeling, and guidance, has proven capable of instilling religious values sustainably in students' daily lives. The implementation of activities such as reading, writing, and memorizing the Qur'an, as well as the practice of prayer and Islamic etiquette, not only enhances students' religious competencies but also fosters attitudes of discipline, responsibility, patience, and respect toward the Qur'an, teachers, and the school environment. Thus, the BTQ program serves not only as a means of developing Qur'anic literacy skills but also as a medium for fostering religious character that is integrated into madrasah culture.

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the BTQ program aligns with Thomas Lickona's concept of character education, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in the character-building process. Students gain cognitive understanding of religious values, internalize them through emotional awareness, and implement them in their daily behavior. This indicates that religious character development through the BTQ program occurs holistically, as it involves the integrated aspects of knowledge, experience, and action. These findings also reinforce the view that character education based on consistent religious practice can foster more permanent and sustainable behavioral changes in students.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the BTQ program still faces several challenges, such as variations in students' abilities, limited learning time, and suboptimal parental involvement in home-based guidance. Therefore, strategies to strengthen the program are needed through a more adaptive learning approach, enhanced student motivation, and strengthened collaboration between madrasahs and parents. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for Islamic elementary education institutions in developing religious habit-forming programs integrated with character education. Additionally, this study also contributes theoretically to the development of character education studies based on religious values, particularly in the implementation of character education through the BTQ program in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah setting.

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