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Prophetic Modelling, Habituation, and Spiritual Experience as Mechanisms of Islamic Moral Character Formation: Evidence from Simtudduror Practice in Indonesian Pesantren

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Abstract

Moral character formation in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) continues to face challenges from digital media influences that erode students' Islamic ethical dispositions, with existing scholarship offering limited analysis of how traditional devotional practices function as internalization mechanisms. This study investigated how Simtudduror recitation a structured reading and explication of Al-Habib Ali Al-Habsyi's mawlid text is implemented at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam Sumberkerang Gending, Probolinggo, Indonesia, and how it contributes to the formation of akhlak mahmudah (noble moral character) in students. A qualitative single case study design was employed with 20 purposively selected participants: one kiai (pesantren director), two tahfidz supervisors, twelve students aged 13–18 with at least one year of programme participation, and five parents. Data were generated across eight observation sessions, twenty in-depth semi-structured interviews, and systematic document analysis. The Miles, Huberman, Saldaña interactive thematic model was applied, with trustworthiness established through source, technique, and time triangulation and member checking. Findings reveal that Simtudduror produces moral character formation through four interlocking mechanisms: (1) repetitive recitation as habituation, (2) syarah (explanatory commentary) as reflective meaning-making, (3) affective-spiritual experience as moral feeling, and (4) ustaz modelling and collective cultural norms as observational learning. Across all five akhlak dimensions measured respect for teachers (ta'dzim), discipline (intizam), humility (tawadu'), self-control (dhabit al-nafs), and religious engagement documented behavioural improvements were gradual, variable, and contextually embedded within the broader pesantren education system. The study offers an empirically grounded four-mechanism model that repositions devotional recitation practice as a theoretically coherent pedagogy of Islamic moral formation, extending Lickona's tripartite character model to devotional educational contexts.

Keywords: Simtudduror; Akhlak mahmudah; Islamic boarding school; Value internalization; Islamic character education; Mawlid; Pesantren

Introduction

The formation of Islamic moral character (*akhlak*) constitutes the foundational objective of Islamic education, occupying a position that transcends the mere transmission of religious knowledge to encompass the cultivation of virtuous dispositions, ethical conduct, and spiritual character aligned with Qur'anic and Prophetic standards (Iskandar, 2022; Marzuki, 2015; Nasr, 1987). This orientation places *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia at the intersection of religious formation and character education, functioning simultaneously as theological institutions, character formation

environments, and cultural transmitters of Islamic civilizational values (Dhofier, 2011; Zulhimma, 2013). Indonesia's approximately 36,000 *pesantren* serve over 4.7 million students and represent a pedagogical tradition that predates formal national education by centuries (Kementerian Agama, 2022; Steenbrink, 1994). Within this tradition, character formation is pursued not through formal instruction alone but through an integrated system of lived religious practice, communal habituation, and experiential moral learning (Bruinessen, 1995; Nata, 2012).

Contemporary *pesantren* nonetheless face significant pressures on their traditional moral formation functions. The pervasive influence of digital media, social networking platforms, and shifting patterns of peer interaction has introduced value frameworks that may compete with or erode Islamic ethical orientations among students (Wandi, 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). Empirical research across Indonesian *pesantren* has documented declining consistency in students' daily *adab* (Islamic etiquette), reduced reverence toward teachers, and weakening communal solidarity trends that persist despite ongoing religious instruction (Fuadi et al., 2024; Rahman, 2024). These challenges indicate that doctrinal instruction alone is insufficient for moral formation, and that complementary modalities engaging the affective, experiential, and social dimensions of character development are needed.

Within the Islamic tradition, *mawlid* (devotional literature commemorating the Prophet Muhammad) has historically served as a vehicle for spiritual formation, emotional connection to Prophetic values, and communal religious identity (Kaptein, 1993; Katz, 2007; Reichmuth, 2006). *Simtudduror*, composed by Al-Habib Ali bin Muhammad Al-Habsyi (1839-1915) of Hadhramaut, Yemen, is one of the most widely recited *mawlid* texts in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, containing biographical narratives of the Prophet, eulogistic poetry, supplications, and explicit moral exemplars drawn from Prophetic conduct (Fuadi et al., 2024; Ho, 2006). Unlike purely textual pedagogical works such as *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, *Simtudduror* integrates devotional recitation with narrative ethical content, generating both cognitive and affective engagement with Prophetic character.

The scholarly literature on character formation in *pesantren* has grown substantially, with studies addressing *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), habitual practices, and leadership roles of *kiai* in moral development (Fuadi et al., 2024; Rahman, 2024; Sholah & Mawaddah, 2023). In the broader field of character education, Lickona's (1991) tripartite model *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action* provides an influential framework for understanding how moral dispositions are cultivated across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory adds the mechanism of observational learning and modeling, while Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural framework emphasizes the role of social interaction and collective cultural practice in mediating individual development. These theoretical resources converge in suggesting that effective character formation requires structured integration of knowledge, emotion, practice, and social modelling.

However, the existing literature reveals three substantive gaps. First, while *Simtudduror* is among the most widely practiced devotional traditions in Indonesian *pesantren*, it has received minimal scholarly attention as a pedagogical medium for moral character formation; existing studies focus on its historical, literary, and cultural dimensions rather than its educational mechanisms (Fuadi et al., 2024; Katz, 2007). Second, most studies of character formation in *pesantren* examine outcomes rather than specifying the internalization mechanisms through which religious activities produce behavioral change a process-level gap that limits their theoretical and practical applicability (Rahman, 2024; Sholah & Mawaddah, 2023). Third, the role of affective-spiritual experience in moral

internalization the *moral feeling* dimension remains undertheorized in the Islamic educational literature relative to cognitive and behavioral dimensions, despite its recognized centrality in Islamic pedagogical philosophy (Majid & Suyadi, 2021; Nasr, 1987).

This study addresses these gaps by examining how *Simtudduror* recitation is implemented and how it contributes to *akhlak mahmudah* formation at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam Sumberkerang Gending, Probolinggo a site that has institutionalized *Simtudduror* as a structured weekly character formation programme. The study's novelty lies in three contributions: (1) constructing an empirically grounded four-mechanism model of how devotional recitation produces moral internalization, integrating cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social-modeling dimensions; (2) extending Lickona's (1991) tripartite character model to the Islamic devotional educational context; and (3) providing the first systematic empirical account of *Simtudduror* as an intentional pedagogical practice in *akhlak* formation.

This study is guided by three research questions: (1) How is *Simtudduror* recitation structured and implemented at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam? (2) Through what mechanisms does *Simtudduror* practice support the internalization of *akhlak mahmudah* values in students? (3) What is the observed contribution of *Simtudduror* to students' behavioural development across the dimensions of *ta'dzim*, discipline, *tawadu'*, self-control, and religious engagement?

Method

This study employed a qualitative single instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2024). A qualitative approach was selected because the research questions concern the processual, experiential, and meaning-laden dimensions of *Simtudduror* implementation and moral value internalization as lived by participants in their natural institutional setting phenomena that require interpretive, context-sensitive analysis rather than numerical measurement (Creswell, 2024; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The bounded case comprises the implementation of *Simtudduror* as a *akhlak mahmudah* formation medium at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam, rather than the pesantren's full character education system, enabling focused examination of this specific educational practice. Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam was identified as an information-rich case (Patton, 2015) because it is one of the few *pesantren* in Probolinggo with a documented, institutionally mandated *Simtudduror* programme explicitly oriented toward character formation.

The study was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam Sumberkerang, Gending, Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia, from March to May 2025. The site was purposively selected on three criteria: (1) consistent institutional implementation of *Simtudduror* as a mandatory weekly programme; (2) availability of systematic documentation (schedules, attendance records, character development notes); and (3) institutional accessibility and willingness to participate. Data collection encompassed eight *Simtudduror* sessions observed in full and 20 individual interview sessions.

Twenty participants were selected using purposive sampling (Creswell, 2024; Patton, 2015) to ensure maximum relevance to the research questions and variation across roles and levels of engagement. The sample comprised one *kiai* (pesantren director), two *ustaz/ustazah* (supervisors), twelve students, and five parents. Students were selected on the following criteria: (a) age 13–18 years; (b) minimum one year of continuous *Simtudduror* participation; (c) representation of high, moderate, and low engagement categories as assessed by supervisors; and (d) voluntary informed consent. Parents were selected as external observers who could cross-validate behavioural change

reported by students. Data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015) was confirmed when no new themes emerged in the final interview sessions. Table 1 presents the full participant profile.

Table 1 Participant Profile (N = 20)

No.	Code	Role	Profile	Basis for Selection
1	KI-01	Kiai (Pesantren Director)	Male; >20 years in leadership	Overall institutional authority; designed and oversees the Simtudduror programme
2	US-01	Ustaz (Male Supervisor)	Male; ≥5 years teaching Simtudduror	Primary pedagogical guide; delivers syarah and corrective feedback
3	US-02	Ustazah (Female Supervisor)	Female; ≥3 years teaching Simtudduror	Co-facilitator; monitors female students' participation and conduct
4–15	ST-01–ST-12	Students (12)	Aged 13–18; ≥1 year in programme; representing high, moderate and low engagement	Primary recipients of intervention; purposively selected to capture variation in character development
16–20	OT-01–OT-05	Parents (5)	Mothers and fathers of selected students	External observers of behavioural change in home environment; cross-validate school-based observations

Note. KI = Kiai (Director); US = Ustaz/Ustazah (Supervisor); ST = Student; OT = Orang Tua (Parent). Engagement level assessed by supervising ustaz/ustazah.

Three complementary data sources were employed. *Participant observation* was conducted across eight complete *Simtudduror* sessions (March–May 2025; each lasting 90–120 minutes). The researcher adopted an observer-as-participant role (Arikunto, 2021), attending as an unobtrusive observer without involvement in facilitation or decision-making. Field notes documented session stages, teacher student interactions, student conduct, and preliminary analytic memos. Observation focused on six behavioural indicators: respect toward teachers (*ta'dzim*), punctuality and participation, humility (*tawadu'*), self-control during sessions, peer interactions, and application of values beyond session contexts. *Semi-structured in-depth interviews* were conducted individually with all 20 participants (30–60 minutes each; 20 total sessions), using protocols organized around the three research questions. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim. *Document analysis* encompassed: weekly activity schedules, student attendance registers, the pesantren's behavioural code, character development notes maintained by supervisors, session photographs, and administrative records related to the programme (Yin, 2024).

Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2024) interactive thematic model across three concurrent and iterative components: (1) *data condensation* systematic open and focused coding of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents, generating and consolidating descriptive and interpretive categories; (2) *data display* construction of thematic matrices, behavioral comparison tables (pre/post observation), and cross-participant comparison grids; and (3) *conclusion drawing and verification* inductive generation of findings verified through iterative return to raw data

and comparison across data sources. Both researchers coded independently, with inter-coder discrepancies resolved through discussion until full consensus was achieved.

Trustworthiness was established through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four-criterion framework. *Credibility* was achieved via: source triangulation (comparing *kiai*, ustaz, student, and parent accounts of identical phenomena), technique triangulation (cross-checking interview data with observational records and documentary evidence), time triangulation (data collected across eight sessions spanning three months to assess behavioural consistency), and member checking (returning interpretations to the *kiai* and both supervisors for verification). *Transferability* was supported through thick contextual description of the site, participants, and programme. *Dependability* was ensured through systematic audit trail documentation of all analytical decisions. *Confirmability* was maintained through researcher reflexivity journals and by anchoring all claims to traceable data sources (Moleong, 2024).

Results

Findings are presented across three themes corresponding to the research questions. Table 2 presents the pre/post behavioural observation matrix, and Table 3 maps the four identified internalization mechanisms.

Implementation Structure of Simtudduror Recitation

Observation data across all eight sessions confirmed that *Simtudduror* is implemented as a mandatory weekly programme, conducted every Thursday night after *Isha* prayer, lasting 90–120 minutes, and attended by all students. Sessions followed a consistent five-stage format: (1) formal opening, (2) collective recitation of *Simtudduror* with distinctive melodic irama, (3) *syarah* (explanatory commentary by the ustaz connecting textual content to students' daily lives), (4) collective reflection, and (5) closing supplication (*doa*). Students attended with personal copies of the text and maintained attentive postures during ustaz commentary. Attendance registers confirmed high and consistent participation rates throughout the research period. The pesantren director articulated the programme's pedagogical intent: "*Simtudduror is not merely a mawlid recitation activity. What we hope for is that students understand the akhlak of the Prophet and then habituate it in daily life. That is why, after every reading, there is always an explanation and counsel relating to their conduct.*" (KI-01, Interview, March 2025)

Supervisors corroborated this intentional character formation orientation. Ustaz US-01 explained: "*We do not only teach how to recite. We also explain the values embedded within the text. When a student is lacking in discipline or is not respecting the teacher, we typically connect it to the Prophetic character addressed in the session.*" (US-01, Interview, March 2025)

Document analysis of the programme schedule, behavioural tata tertib (code of conduct), and character development notes confirmed that session attendance, conduct, and post-session behavioural consistency are formally monitored components of the pesantren's character evaluation system.

Mechanisms of Akhlak Mahmudah Internalization

Cross-analysis of observation field notes, interview data, and documents identified four sequential and reinforcing mechanisms through which *Simtudduror* contributes to *akhlak* internalization. These are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 Four Mechanisms of Akhlak Mahmudah Internalization through Simtudduror

Mechanism	Pedagogical Process	Observable Outcome	Theoretical Grounding
1. Repetitive Recitation	Weekly structured oral repetition of Simtudduror text	Habituation of Islamic values; punctuality; sustained attention across sessions	Habituation (Lickona, 1991); spaced retrieval (Bandura, 1986; Cepeda et al., 2006)
2. Syarah (Explanatory Commentary)	Ustaz contextualises Prophetic narratives to students' real-life situations	Transfer of normative values to concrete behavioural application; improved speech and emotional regulation	Meaningful learning (Bruner, 1996); constructivist scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978)
3. Affective-Spiritual Experience	Melodic recitation, salawat, and Prophetic narratives generate emotional resonance	Self-control, tawadu', and khushu'; internalised motivation to emulate Prophetic character	Moral feeling (Lickona, 1991); religious experience and value internalisation (Rumi et al., 2023)
4. Modelling and Collective Habituation	Ustaz models respectful conduct; all students follow identical behavioural protocols	Observational learning; collective norm reinforcement; character generalisation to home context	Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986); cultural transmission (Vygotsky, 1978; Ahmad, 2023)

Note. Mechanisms operate sequentially and cyclically within each session. All theoretical citations refer to the full reference list.

Mechanism 1, *repetitive recitation* functioned as structured habituation. Students reported that the predictable weekly structure transformed *Simtudduror* from an external obligation into an internalized routine. Student ST-06 described: "*Before, I would sometimes arrive late and was not very attentive during the session. Now I make the effort to arrive early because I feel I lose something if I miss the ustaz's explanation. I am also much more careful in how I speak to the teacher.*" (ST-06, Interview, April 2025)

Mechanism 2, *syarah* commentary served as reflective bridge-building between Prophetic text and lived experience. Students described concrete behavioural insights emerging from the ustaz's contextualisation. Student ST-09 stated: "*What I feel most strongly after following Simtudduror regularly is that it is now easier to remember the akhlak of the Prophet. When I am angry or want to joke excessively, I recall the ustaz's counsel about how the Prophet conducted himself toward others.*" (ST-09, Interview, April 2025)

Mechanism 3 *affective-spiritual experience* emerged through the melodic recitation and Prophetic narratives that generated an emotionally resonant atmosphere. Multiple students described feelings of calm, spiritual attentiveness (*khushu'*), and internal motivation to emulate Prophetic character, particularly during the *salawat* portions of the recitation. Mechanism 4 *ustaz modelling and collective cultural norms* operated through direct observation of the ustaz's demeanour and the collective protocol observed by all students. Parents provided independent confirmation of

behavioural generalisation to home contexts: *"Since attending Simtudduror regularly, my child speaks more respectfully at home, shows more deference to parents, and is more diligent in praying together. The change did not happen all at once it became visible gradually after several months at the pesantren."* (OT-03, Interview, May 2025)

Observed Contributions to Akhlak Mahmudah Development

Convergent evidence from observation, interviews, and document analysis confirmed positive developments across five *akhlak* dimensions. Table 2 presents the structured comparison of observed behaviour before and after consistent participation.

**Table 2. Observed Behavioural Change Across Five Akhlak Dimensions
(Observational and Interview Evidence)**

Akhlak Dimension	Baseline Observation (Before Consistent Participation)	Post-participation Observation (After ≥1 Year)
Ta'dzim (Respect for teachers)	Some students continued talking or were inattentive during ustaz explanations; greeting etiquette was inconsistent	Students more attentive and composed; consistently greeted and kissed the ustaz's hand after sessions; used more respectful register in speech
Intizam (Discipline)	Late arrivals and inconsistent participation throughout the full session were observed	Punctual arrival; completion of all session stages; increased adherence to pesantren regulations
Tawadu' (Humility)	Selective peer interaction; reluctance to assist during collective activities	Greater cooperative behaviour; readiness to assist peers; non-argumentative response to ustaz direction
Dhabt al-Nafs (Self-control)	Excessive chatting or joking during recitation; difficulty maintaining composure	Sustained composure during sessions; reduced unnecessary conversation; calmer interaction patterns with peers
Religiosity (Active Participation)	Variable engagement with recitation; passive posture; limited questioning	Active participation in recitation; more focused (<i>khushu'</i>) demeanour; spontaneous questions about session content

Note. All observations based on eight structured observation sessions and corroborated by interview data and character development documentation. 'Before' reflects baseline observations from initial sessions; 'After' reflects observations from sessions 5–8 and interview accounts.

Character development records maintained by supervisors corroborated the observational data, documenting longitudinal improvement on disciplinary compliance, greeting etiquette, and session participation. However, improvement rates varied across students, with those categorized as high-engagement by supervisors showing earlier and more consistent change. Supervisor US-02 confirmed: *"The change most visible is in discipline and in the way students show respect to teachers. Now they follow activities more punctually, are calmer during sessions, and are more easily guided than before."* (US-02, Interview, May 2025)

Critically, supervisors and the pesantren director consistently emphasized that *Simtudduror* operates as one component within a broader character formation system alongside *salat berjama'ah*

(congregational prayer), *kitab kuning* study, daily *adab* habituation, and musyrif mentoring rather than as an isolated causal intervention.

Discussion

Simtudduror as Structured Pedagogy: Beyond Devotional Tradition

The finding that *Simtudduror* at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam is implemented through a consistent five-stage pedagogical structure opening, collective recitation, *syarah*, reflection, and closing represents a significant repositioning of this devotional practice. Rather than functioning as an informal communal ritual, *Simtudduror* has been institutionally structured as an intentional educational programme in which each stage serves a distinct pedagogical function. This finding extends Fuadi et al.'s (2024) historical account of *mawlid* traditions and Rahman's (2024) documentation of *kiai* leadership in character formation, both of which treat devotional practices primarily as cultural or spiritual phenomena rather than as pedagogically designed learning environments.

The structural intentionality observed particularly the *kiai*'s explicit articulation of the programme's character formation objective and the integration of behavioural monitoring through attendance and character development records aligns with Lickona's (1991) argument that effective character education requires purposeful design, not merely exposure to moral content. The pesantren has, in effect, transformed a traditional *mawlid* practice into what Noddings (2002) terms a *moral environment*: a structured setting in which values are not merely stated but enacted through institutional practices, relational norms, and accountability mechanisms.

The Four-Mechanism Internalization Model: Cognitive, Affective, Spiritual, and Social Dimensions

The four, mechanism model identified in this study repetitive recitation, *syarah* commentary, affective-spiritual experience, and modelling with collective habituation provides the first empirically grounded account of how *Simtudduror* practice produces moral internalization, filling the process-level gap identified in previous studies (Fuadi et al., 2024; Rahman, 2024; Sholah & Mawaddah, 2023).

Mechanism 1 (repetitive recitation as habituation) aligns with Lickona's (1991) concept of *moral action* through practice and with Aristotelian virtue ethics, in which virtuous character is formed through the consistent performance of virtuous acts until they become habitual dispositions (Annas, 2011). The transition from externally motivated attendance to intrinsically motivated participation documented in student accounts of feeling incomplete without the session reflects the developmental progression along Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory continuum from external regulation toward identified and integrated regulation. This is consistent with Saaduddin et al.'s (2024) finding that structured Islamic educational repetition supports attention, retention, behavioral reproduction, and motivation through social learning mechanisms.

Mechanism 2 (*syarah* as reflective bridge-building) operationalizes Bruner's (1996) constructivist principle of meaningful learning that new knowledge is most effectively assimilated when connected to learners' lived experience. The ustaz's practice of linking Prophetic narratives to students' actual relational challenges (disrespect toward teachers, emotional dysregulation, peer conflicts) constitutes what Mezirow (1997) terms transformative learning: a reflective process through which habitual meaning frameworks are critically examined and revised. This mechanism

distinguishes *Simtudduror* from normative pedagogical kitab such as *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* (Rahman, 2024), which transmit ethical prescriptions without systematic contextualisation to students' contemporary situations.

Mechanism 3 (affective-spiritual experience) addresses the most theoretically underrepresented dimension in the Islamic character education literature. The finding that melodic recitation, *salawat*, and Prophetic narratives generate emotional engagement that motivates behavioral change corroborates Majid and Suyadi's (2021) argument that Islamic character education must engage *moral feeling* rather than targeting only cognitive understanding or behavioral compliance. From a psychology of religion perspective, Rumi et al. (2023) and Syakur et al. (2022) document that religiously induced emotional experiences strengthen value internalization through heightened affective salience. This mechanism explains the characteristically delayed but durable quality of the behavioural change documented in this study: because values are anchored in emotionally resonant experiences rather than solely in cognitive instruction, they tend to be more deeply consolidated over time.

Mechanism 4 (modelling and collective habituation) is theoretically grounded in Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, which identifies observational learning, vicarious reinforcement, and modeling as primary mechanisms of behavioral acquisition. The ustaz's sustained performance of respectful, patient, and dignified conduct during sessions provides a living behavioral model through which students encounter Prophetic character values embodied in a credible authority figure. This finding resonates with Ahmad's (2023) analysis of the *santri* formation tradition, which emphasizes that the teacher-student relationship (*ta'lim*) in *pesantren* functions as a crucial sociocultural medium for value transmission beyond textual instruction.

Gradual, Variable, and System-Embedded Character Development

A theoretically significant feature of the findings is the explicitly documented variability in character development across students and the temporal gradualness of behavioral change—with parents and supervisors consistently reporting changes becoming visible after several months of participation. This pattern is consistent with both cognitive developmental theories of moral formation (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1969) and Islamic educational philosophy, which emphasizes *istiqamah* (consistency) and *tadarruj* (gradualism) as structural properties of authentic character change (Marzuki, 2015; Nasr, 1987).

Equally important is the study's finding that *Simtudduror* functions as one component within a synergistic multi-programme character formation ecology operating alongside congregational prayer, *kitab kuning* study, daily etiquette habituation, and mentoring. This finding contradicts single-intervention logic in character education research and supports ecological approaches (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that emphasize the cumulative and interactive effects of multiple developmental contexts. Sholah and Mawaddah (2023) similarly found that character formation in *pesantren* reflects a systemic rather than additive process. The distinctive contribution of *Simtudduror* within this ecology confirmed by supervisors and the director lies in its comparative strength in activating the affective and spiritual dimensions of character formation, complementing the primarily cognitive and behavioral emphases of other programmes. This differentiation provides practitioners with a theoretically informed basis for programme combination and design.

This study contributes three theoretical advances to the Islamic character education literature. First, it extends Lickona's (1991) tripartite character model (*moral knowing, moral feeling, moral*

action) to the devotional recitation educational context, demonstrating that *Simtudduror* engages all three dimensions simultaneously through its four mechanisms. Second, it provides the first empirically grounded model specifying how a traditional *mawlid* practice functions as a structured pedagogical medium rather than merely a cultural ritual. Third, it contributes to the growing literature repositioning *pesantren* educational practices as theoretically coherent pedagogies that merit systematic scholarly attention in comparative and international educational research.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *Simtudduror* recitation at Pondok Pesantren Tarbiyatul Islam Sumberkerang Gending functions as a structured pedagogical medium for *akhlak mahmudah* formation through four interlocking mechanisms: repetitive recitation as habituation, *syarah* commentary as reflective meaning-making, affective-spiritual experience as moral feeling, and ustaz modelling with collective cultural norms as observational learning. Across all five documented *akhlak* dimensions *ta'dzim*, discipline, *tawadu'*, self-control, and religious engagement behavioural improvements were observed to be gradual, variable, and system-embedded rather than uniform or attributable to *Simtudduror* alone. The practice's distinctive pedagogical contribution lies in its activation of the affective and spiritual dimensions of character formation, which complement the cognitive and behavioral emphases of other *pesantren* programmes.

Theoretically, this study extends Lickona's (1991) tripartite character model to the Islamic devotional educational context, introduces a four-mechanism empirical model of *mawlid*-based moral internalization, and positions *Simtudduror* practice within international character education discourse as a theoretically coherent pedagogical form. Practically, the findings suggest that *pesantren* wishing to optimize *Simtudduror*'s character formation potential should: develop systematic *syarah* guides oriented toward specific *akhlak* dimensions; construct structured behavioural observation indicators for evaluating character development; establish periodic documentation and evaluation cycles; and design *Simtudduror* as an explicit component within a coordinated multi-programme character formation ecology.

Several directions for future research are indicated. Longitudinal studies tracking the trajectory of *akhlak* development across multiple years of programme participation would strengthen causal inference. Comparative multi-site studies across *pesantren* implementing *Simtudduror* with varying levels of pedagogical intentionality would enable assessment of the model's boundary conditions and contextual moderators. Mixed-methods designs incorporating standardized *akhlak* assessment instruments alongside qualitative process analysis would complement the present findings with quantitative measurement of effect magnitude. Additionally, comparative studies examining *Simtudduror* alongside other *mawlid* traditions in Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern Islamic educational contexts would contribute to a more generalized theory of devotional recitation as Islamic moral pedagogy.

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