Linguistic Habituation as a Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Moral Education: Polite Speech and the Formation of *Adab*

Azka Zidan Annabil,[1]* Tutuk Ningsih,[2] Slamet Yahya,[3] Muhammad Hammam[4]

[1,2,3] Prof. Dr. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri State Islamic University, Purwokerto, Indonesia
[4] Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract: This study examines the cultivation of Islamic moral education through linguistic habituation grounded in local wisdom, and positions polite speech as a hidden curriculum for the formation of adab within the pesantren environment. It specifically explores the pedagogical role of everyday linguistics practices in shaping students' moral dispositions beyond formal religious instruction. A qualitative case study was conducted in an Islamic boarding school, involving 18 purposively selected informants, including a *kyai*, three *ustadz*, two administrators, and twelve *santri*. Data were collected through prolonged participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and analysis of institutional documents. Trustworthiness was ensured through source and method triangulation, member checking and iterative thematic analysis guided by an interactive analytical model. The findings indicate that polite language, particularly the habitual use of Javanese *Krama Inggil*, functions not as explicit linguistic instruction but as a culturally embedded moral practice integrated into daily life. Such linguistic habituation fosters verbal politeness, emotional self-control, humility (*tawadhu'*), and respect toward teachers and peers, thereby cultivating an orderly, low-conflict, and socially harmonious communicative climate. Language thus operates as a mechanism of moral self-regulation functioning as an implicit moral infrastructure that shapes students' character through continuous interaction. The novelty of this study lies in reconceptualizing language as a core pedagogical instrument and hidden curriculum within Islamic moral education, rather than merely as a communicative or cultural medium. This study contributes theoretically by integrating Islamic moral pedagogy, virtue ethics, and hidden curriculum theory, while practically proposing a context-sensitive model of *adab* formation adaptable to diverse Islamic educational settings.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pendidikan adab Islami dibentuk melalui habituasi linguistik berbasis kearifan lokal dengan menempatkan bahasa santun sebagai hidden curriculum dalam kehidupan pesantren. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis peran pedagogis praktik bahasa sehari-hari dalam membentuk disposisi moral santri yang melampaui pembelajaran agama formal. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dengan melibatkan 18 informan yang dipilih secara purposif, terdiri atas satu kyai, tiga ustadz, dua pengurus, dan dua belas santri. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif mendalam, wawancara semi-terstruktur, serta analisis dokumen kelembagaan. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode, member checking, serta analisis tematik berbasis model interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan

bahwa penggunaan bahasa santun, khususnya habituasi bahasa Jawa Krama Inggil, tidak diposisikan sebagai pembelajaran linguistik formal, melainkan sebagai praktik kultural-moral yang terintegrasi dalam rutinitas keseharian. Habituasi linguistik membentuk adab lisan, pengendalian emosi, sikap rendah hati (tawadhu'), serta penghormatan terhadap guru dan sesama, sehingga tercipta iklim komunikasi yang tertib, minim konflik, dan harmonis secara sosial. Bahasa berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pengendalian diri moral sekaligus infrastruktur etis yang secara implisit membentuk karakter santri melalui interaksi berkelanjutan. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada konseptualisasi bahasa sebagai instrumen pedagogis dan hidden curriculum dalam pendidikan moral Islam, bukan sekadar alat komunikasi. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan pedagogi moral Islam, virtue ethics, dan teori hidden curriculum. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menawarkan model pembentukan adab yang kontekstual dan adaptif untuk diterapkan pada berbagai lembaga pendidikan Islam.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology and the increasing intensity of global information flows have significantly reshaped communication patterns among younger generations. While technological advancement has broadened access to knowledge, it has simultaneously generated serious ethical challenges, particularly the erosion of linguistic politeness and the decline of respectful interaction in everyday social life (Sukowati & Subrata, 2022; Eslami et al., 2023; Sætra & Danaher, 2022). This phenomenon constitutes not only a social issue but also a pedagogical challenge within Islamic education, given that the cultivation of *akhlak* and *adab* represents a fundamental objective of the Islamic educational process (*tarbiyah*).

From an Islamic educational perspective, learning is not confined to the cognitive transmission of knowledge but is fundamentally directed toward the formation of ethically grounded individuals (*insān adabī*) (Abdalla, 2025; Papakostas, 2025). Education is therefore understood as a holistic process that integrates intellectual development with moral cultivation, in which everyday behavior becomes a central site of value internalization. Within this framework, language holds a strategic pedagogical role, as patterns of speech reflect and simultaneously shape moral consciousness. Ethical use of language fosters respect, self-restraint, and social sensitivity, positioning speech not merely as a neutral medium of communication but as a formative instrument in character development (Zahiya, 2024; Li & Li, 2025; Tomar, 2025). The practice of safeguarding speech entails avoiding harmful, humiliating, or aggressive expressions while nurturing gentle, polite, and meaningful verbal interaction. Through continuous linguistic practice, moral values are gradually embodied and normalized in daily social

relations, allowing ethical dispositions to be internalized through habituation rather than formal instruction.

Within the context of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), language occupies a particularly strategic position in the cultivation of *adab*. Pesantren education extends beyond formal classroom instruction and operates through cultural transmission, moral exemplification, and habituation embedded in everyday life (Mujahid, 2021; Irfani et al., 2025; Sumardi, 2013). Among Javanese pesantren communities, the sustained use of Javanese *Krama Inggil* as a daily mode of interaction represents a distinctive cultural practice. This refined linguistic register requires speakers to attend carefully to ethical norms, social hierarchy, and respect toward interlocutors, thereby embedding moral values intrinsically within everyday communication.

Previous studies suggest that the habituation of Javanese *Krama Inggil* contributes positively to the development of communicative character and mutual respect among students (Hidayah et al., 2023; Pangestu, 2025; Nursanti et al., 2024). Polite language use is widely associated with moral integrity, whereas harsh or aggressive speech often correlates with declining ethical behavior and the emergence of negative social phenomena, including verbal bullying in educational settings (Downes et al., 2021; Zammit, 2025; Haugh et al., 2022). However, most existing studies continue to conceptualize language primarily as a communicative instrument or as a supportive element of general character education, rather than as a pedagogical mechanism within Islamic moral education.

Although prior research has acknowledged the importance of polite language habituation in character formation, such studies generally position language as an auxiliary component of communication ethics or moral education in a broad sense. Scholarly inquiries that explicitly conceptualize language as a pedagogical medium within the system of Islamic moral education, particularly in pesantren contexts, remain limited. This gap is significant, considering that linguistic habituation in pesantren traditions is inseparable from *tarbiyah* and is deeply integrated with Islamic values, local wisdom, and continuous educational practices embedded in everyday life (MF & Tasmin, 2025; Mujahid, 2021; Sabaruddin & Mastur, 2023).

In Javanese pesantren settings, Javanese *Krama Inggil* functions not merely as a means of communication but as a mechanism for internalizing *adab*, including respect for religious authority, self-regulation in speech, and the cultivation of harmonious social relations. Language in this context operates as a lived moral practice rather than an abstract ethical principle. Therefore, a deeper pedagogical examination is needed to understand how linguistic habituation contributes to the moral dispositions within Islamic educational environments. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how linguistic habituation functions as a pedagogical mechanism and hidden curriculum in shaping adab within Islamic moral education in a pesantren context.

This study offers a novel contribution by reconceptualizing linguistic habituation as a pedagogical mechanism in Islamic moral education rather than merely a cultural or communicative practice. Unlike previous studies that treat polite language as an accessory to character education, this research positions language as a form of hidden curriculum through which *adab* is continuously internalized in everyday educational life. By integrating Islamic moral theory with

local linguistic wisdom, this study demonstrates how habitual polite speech functions as an embodied moral practice that shapes self-restraint, humility (*Tawadhu'*), and respectful social relations. Conceptually, this research enriches the discourse on Islamic education by bridging moral pedagogy, local wisdom, and hidden curriculum theory. Practically, it proposes a contextually grounded model of Islamic moral education that can be adaptively applied across diverse Islamic educational settings without detaching moral formation from cultural realities.

METHOD

This study adopted an interpretive qualitative case study design to generate in-depth contextual understanding of how Islamic moral education is enacted through linguistic habituation as a lived pedagogical practice within a pesantren setting. While the interactive model guided the analytic flow, thematic analysis was conducted reflexively to capture patterned meanings emerging from participants' lived experiences rather than to test predefined categories. A case study approach was selected because it enables an in-de. pth examination of complex social and pedagogical phenomena that are inseparable from their real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This design is especially appropriate for exploring how moral values and educational practices are constructed, experienced, and sustained within Islamic boarding school environments, where education operates through continuous interaction, habituation, and cultural transmission rather than solely through formal instruction (Stake, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The study involved 18 purposively selected informants consisting of one religious leader, three teachers, two boarding school administrators, and twelve students. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure that participants possessed direct experience and sufficient insight into linguistic practices and moral education processes under investigation. This sampling strategy aligns with qualitative research principles that prioritize information-rich cases over statistical representation, allowing for deeper analytical engagement with participants' lived experiences and interpretive perspectives (Patton, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data were generated through participant observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation enabled the researcher to engage directly with daily interactions, communicative routines, and behavioral norms within the boarding school, thereby capturing naturally occurring linguistic practices and moral expressions that might not emerge through interviews alone (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Emerson et al., 2014). In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit participants' interpretations of polite speech, linguistic habituation, and the moral meanings attached to language use, while document analysis provided institutional context through the examination of regulations, activity records, and written policies related to language and discipline (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis followed a thematic analytical process informed by the interactive model of qualitative analysis. The first stage involved data condensation, referring to the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into analytically meaningful units without detaching them from their contextual

significance (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2021). Condensed data were then organized and displayed through thematic matrices and analytic narratives to facilitate pattern recognition and conceptual linkage across data sources. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions through iterative comparison, reflexive interpretation, and constant engagement with the data corpus to ensure analytical rigor and theoretical coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

To ensure data trustworthiness, multiple validation strategies were employed. Source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied by comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance credibility and analytical consistency (Carter et al., 2014; Flick, 2018). Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of meaning and representation from their perspectives. These procedures align with established criteria of qualitative rigor, including credibility, dependability, and confirmability, as widely endorsed in contemporary qualitative research literature (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Integration of Language, Culture, and Islamic Moral Education

The findings of this study reveal that linguistic habituation functions as a central pedagogical mechanism in Islamic moral education rather than as a peripheral cultural practice. Specifically, the results identify four interrelated findings: (1) linguistic practices operate as an integrated moral–cultural system embedded in daily pesantren life; (2) polite speech mediates emotional self-regulation and oral adab; (3) sustained linguistic habituation cultivates tawadhu' and respectful social relations; and (4) language functions as a hidden curriculum that continuously shapes students' moral dispositions.

Interview data indicate a shared understanding among institutional actors that linguistic practice is fundamentally moral rather than technical. The religious leader articulated this orientation clearly:

"*Krama* language is not meant to be tested or memorized. What matters is *adab*, how students learn self-restraint and respect for others through speech." (K1)

Teachers emphasized that linguistic refinement emerges through exposure and modeling rather than correction:

"We rarely correct students directly. Usually, they learn by imitating how teachers speak." (U1)

"If we correct them too harshly, students become afraid. Polite language must be cultivated gradually." (U2)

"Students who are accustomed to refined language tend to show calmer attitudes overall." (U3)

Administrators reinforced this experiential view of language as moral behavior:

"From the way students speak, we can usually tell whether their emotions are well controlled." (P1)

"When conflicts arise among students, they often begin with changes in tone and speech." (P2)

Students described their early adaptation as emotionally challenging but ultimately transformative:

"At first, I was afraid of saying something wrong, so I preferred to stay quiet." (S1)

"My vocabulary was limited, so I felt insecure speaking to senior students." (S3)

"Over time, it became a habit. Speaking politely started to feel natural." (S5)

"Now, using informal language feels less respectful." (S8)

Observational data corroborated these accounts. Teachers and senior students consistently model refined speech, while junior students gradually adjust through immersion. Linguistic errors are tolerated, and conformity emerges organically through participation rather than coercion. Language thus functions as a moral climate that shapes behavior through continuity and repetition.

This subtheme demonstrates that linguistic habituation operates as an integrated moral-cultural system. The embedding of refined language within daily routines allows *adab* to be internalized as lived experience rather than imposed regulation. Moral education unfolds implicitly through participation, suggesting that culturally embedded linguistic practices can sustain ethical formation without formal curricular enforcement.

Islamic Oral *Adab* and Linguistic Self-Regulation

Beyond shaping social interaction, linguistic habituation plays a crucial role in cultivating oral discipline and emotional self-regulation. Observations across classroom discussions, dormitory life, and communal activities indicate that verbal confrontations are rare. Students commonly pause before responding, select words carefully, and avoid confrontational expressions, even in moments of disagreement.

Teachers described refined language as a mechanism that mediates emotional impulses:

"Using polite language forces students to think before they speak." (U2)

"When the language is refined, emotions tend to remain controlled." (U3)

Administrators confirmed the behavioral impact of this practice:

"Cases of harsh or aggressive speech are very rare compared to students' previous schools." (P1)

Students articulated how language affects their emotional awareness:

"When I use polite language, it feels inappropriate to express anger." (S4)

"Refined speech makes me think twice before responding." (S7)

"Even when I feel emotional, I can restrain myself." (S10)

Observational evidence supports these statements. In situations involving disagreement or correction, students maintain calm tones and indirect phrasing. Emotional regulation appears linguistically mediated rather than enforced through formal disciplinary mechanisms.

These findings reveal that oral *adab* is cultivated through linguistic self-regulation. Language functions as an internal checkpoint that intervenes between emotion and expression, enabling students to discipline themselves without external sanctions. This highlights the role of language as a practical medium for ethical self-control within Islamic moral education.

Formation of *Tawadhu'* and Respectful Social Relations

The formation of *Tawadhu'* and respectful social relations emerges as a central outcome of linguistic habituation. Observations show that students consistently adjust speech according to social roles, particularly when interacting with religious authorities and teachers. Honorific expressions, softened tones, and indirect phrasing signal humility and respect embedded in daily communication.

Teachers emphasized that humility is learned experientially:

"Students learn humility not from sermons, but from how they speak every day." (U1)

Administrators observed its broader institutional impact:

"When language is respectful, the overall atmosphere of the pesantren becomes calmer." (P2)

Students articulated the relational effects of refined speech:

"Speaking politely automatically makes me feel more respectful." (S2)

"*Krama* language reduces tension among students." (S6)

"At home, I now use polite language when speaking to my parents." (S9)

"Over time, humility becomes a habit." (S12)

Observational data further indicate that humility is expressed not only verbally but also through tone, posture, and timing of speech, reinforcing respect as embodied practice rather than symbolic compliance.
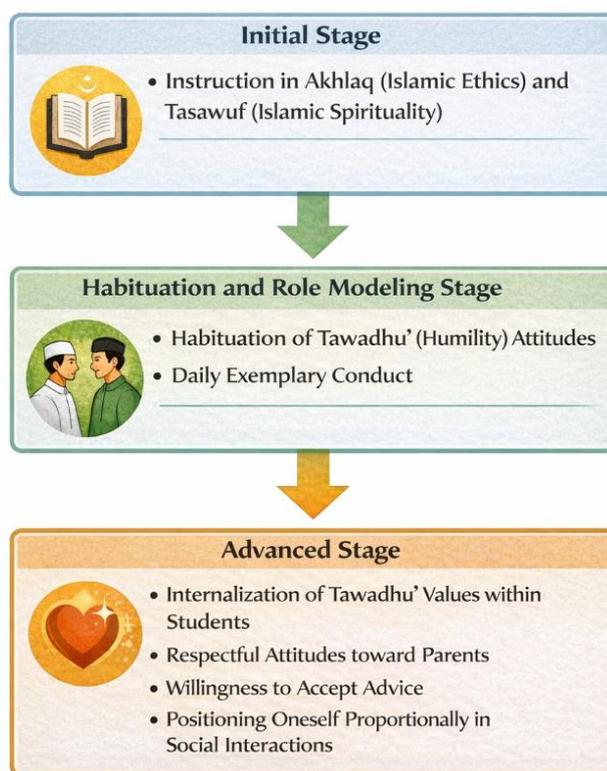
Figure 1. Stages of *Tawadhu'* Formation through Linguistic Habituation

The figure illustrates a progression from imitation to internalization. Empirical data indicate that students move from conscious effort toward spontaneous respectful speech, reflecting the gradual consolidation of humility as a stable moral disposition.

This subtheme demonstrates that *Tawadhu'* is cultivated through sustained linguistic practice embedded in social relations. Respect becomes embodied through language, shaping both vertical and horizontal interactions. The transfer of these habits beyond the pesantren indicates moral continuity rather than situational conformity.

Language as a Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Education

Although institutional regulations emphasize discipline and ethical conduct, they do not explicitly mandate the use of Javanese *Krama Inggil*. This absence highlights language as an implicit educational mechanism embedded within pesantren culture. Observations confirm that linguistic norms are maintained through cultural expectations and role modeling rather than written rules.

Teachers described this implicit process:

"We never write an obligation to use *Krama* language, but students understand it naturally." (U1)

Students confirmed experiential acquisition:

"I learned *Krama* language not in class, but through daily interaction." (S1)

"The more you hear it, the more you naturally follow it." (S11)

Observational data show that linguistic norms are reinforced through everyday interaction rather than authority enforcement, allowing moral learning to occur continuously and contextually.

This finding positions language as a powerful hidden curriculum. Its implicit nature enables uninterrupted moral education, as values are absorbed through routine participation rather than episodic instruction. Linguistic habituation thus functions as a sustained moral infrastructure within pesantren life.

Implications of Linguistic Habituation for Students' Character

Linguistic habituation influences students' character across personal, social, and spiritual dimensions. Observations reveal increased patience, harmonious relationships, and heightened moral awareness in daily conduct. Interview data confirm these outcomes while also indicating variation in depth of internalization.

Teachers acknowledged this diversity:

"Not all students immediately understand the deeper meaning; some initially just follow the habit." (U3)

Students expressed personal transformation:

"I have become more patient." (S5)

"Speaking politely feels like guarding myself." (S11)

The table illustrates that linguistic habituation shapes emotional control, social harmony, and moral awareness beyond verbal expression alone.

Table 1. Dimensions of Islamic *Adab* and Their Observed Impacts on Students

Dimension of Islamic Character	Implemented Elements	Observed Impacts on Students
Individual (Personal Character)	Politeness in speech, emotional self-control	Students become more patient and refrain from using harsh or inappropriate language
Social (Social Character)	Respectful attitudes and empathy	Increased solidarity and harmonious relationships among students
Spiritual (Moral Character)	Intention of worship in guarding one's speech	The emergence of awareness that speech etiquette is an integral part of *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character)

These findings suggest that linguistic habituation operates along a continuum, from symbolic adaptation to genuine internalization. While internalization varies among individuals, the linguistic environment provides a consistent moral framework that supports gradual character development.

Pedagogical Challenges and Adaptive Strategies

Despite its strengths, linguistic habituation presents pedagogical challenges. Students from non-*Krama*-speaking backgrounds reported psychological barriers such as fear and low confidence during early adaptation. Teachers also acknowledged the tension between enforcing norms and maintaining emotional safety.

Students described these challenges:

"I was afraid of making mistakes, especially when speaking to more fluent students." (S3)

"At the beginning, I felt insecure." (S5)

Teachers reflected on pedagogical balance:

"We must be firm, but not make students feel pressured." (U2)

Observations show that the pesantren addresses these challenges through gradual habituation, mixed-language communication, and personal mentoring, creating an inclusive learning environment.

The figure depicts a cyclical process of exposure, imitation, reinforcement, and internalization, emphasizing the gradual and adaptive nature of moral habituation.
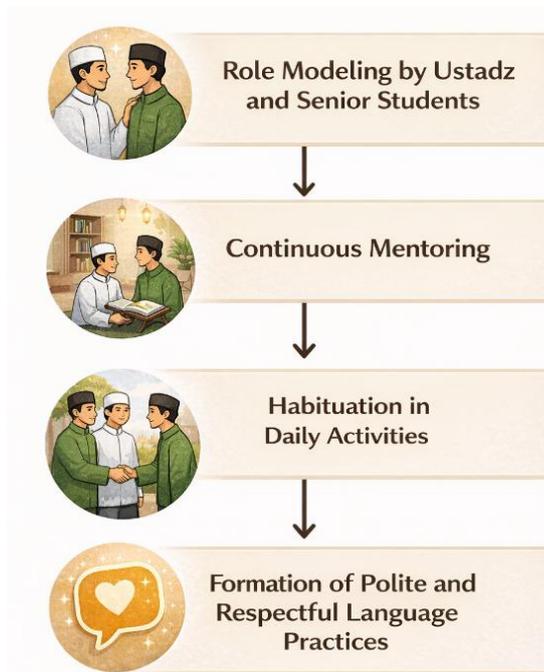

Figure 2. Process Model of Linguistic Habituation in Islamic Moral Education

This subtheme highlights that effective linguistic habituation requires pedagogical sensitivity. Adaptive strategies prevent moral discipline from becoming symbolic pressure, enabling sustainable and inclusive moral education.

Synthesizing the empirical findings, linguistic habituation emerges as a multidimensional pedagogical mechanism integrating moral discipline, emotional regulation, social harmony, and spiritual awareness. The novelty of this study lies in empirically demonstrating that language functions as *lived moral pedagogy* and a *hidden curriculum*, shaping *adab* through continuous, culturally embedded practice. Unlike previous studies that treat polite language as a communicative accessory or cultural marker, this research reveals how linguistic habituation systematically produces moral self-regulation and humility within Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study enrich contemporary discussions on Islamic moral education by demonstrating that the formation of *adab* is most effectively realized through sustained lived practice rather than through formalized moral instruction. In line with established perspectives in Islamic pedagogy, moral education in pesantren operates through habituation, exemplary conduct, and immersion in a value-laden environment, rather than through the mere transmission of normative knowledge (Ningsih, 2021; Mauludin et al., 2025; Zainuri et al., 2025). This study affirms that *adab* is not an abstract ideal to be memorized, but a disposition cultivated through daily participation in morally structured social life.

From a broader theoretical standpoint, these findings resonate with virtue ethics, which conceptualizes moral character as the outcome of repeated practice rather than rule compliance. Virtue ethics emphasizes that moral excellence emerges through habituation, where ethical dispositions are formed gradually as individuals repeatedly enact morally appropriate behavior in concrete situations. The linguistic habituation observed in this study reflects such a process: refined speech practices are not imposed as moral rules but become part of students' habitual ways of engaging with others. This supports the view that moral education is fundamentally formative, shaping character through action rather than instruction.

The empirical evidence that polite language fosters emotional restraint and reflective speech aligns with classical Islamic moral thought, which positions control of the tongue as a central component of ethical self-discipline. In Islamic ethics, speech is understood as a direct manifestation of the inner moral state, and regulating language is inseparable from regulating the heart (Kokhichko, 2022; Li, 2025; Zuhara, 2023; Wulandari & Verlantika, 2021). The findings of this study extend this perspective by showing how linguistic discipline operates as an everyday mechanism of moral self-governance. Through refined language, students learn to pause, reflect, and restrain impulses, translating abstract moral ideals into embodied daily practice.

This process can also be understood through moral habitus. Habitus refers to durable dispositions formed through repeated social practice within a structured environment. The pesantren context provides such a structure, where linguistic norms are consistently reinforced through social interaction. Over time, polite speech becomes an embodied disposition rather than a conscious strategy, shaping how students perceive, feel, and act in social situations. The fact that many students continue to use refined language beyond the pesantren environment indicates that these dispositions have begun to stabilize as part of their moral habitus.

The identification of language as a hidden curriculum further strengthens the theoretical contribution of this study. Hidden curricula operate through implicit norms, routines, and expectations that shape learners' values without explicit articulation (Koutsouris et al., 2021; Abdurrohman et al., 2025; Apple, 2023; Høgdal et al., 2021; Netter, 2022). Unlike formal curricula, which are episodic and bounded, hidden curricula function continuously. This study demonstrates that language is a particularly potent vehicle for such implicit moral education because it permeates all social interactions. Through constant exposure to refined speech, students

internalize norms of respect, restraint, and humility without perceiving them as formal lessons.

Importantly, this study extends existing scholarship on hidden curriculum by showing that language is not merely a medium of instruction but a moral infrastructure that organizes social relations. Linguistic practices subtly regulate power, hierarchy, and interpersonal distance, shaping how students position themselves in relation to others. In this sense, language does not simply reflect moral order but actively produces it through everyday interaction.

The integration of local linguistic wisdom within Islamic moral education also carries significant theoretical implications. The alignment between Javanese ethical philosophy, particularly the emphasis on unggah-ungguh and linguistic hierarchy, and Islamic values of *adab* and humility illustrates how local culture can serve as a conduit for religious moral formation rather than an obstacle (Cheng & Sikka, 2025; Riaz et al., 2023; Harahap & Hamka, 2023; Subandi et al., 2025). This finding challenges rigid dichotomies that separate religious education from local tradition, demonstrating instead that culturally resonant practices can deepen moral internalization by grounding abstract values in familiar social forms.

The findings related to the formation of *Tawadhu'* further reinforce this argument. Humility in this study emerges not as a doctrinal concept but as a lived disposition cultivated through repeated respectful interaction. The staged internalization observed among students corresponds with models that conceptualize moral development as a gradual process moving from external imitation to internal commitment (Coldwell et al., 2022; Park & Bae, 2023; Rajan, 2025). This supports the view that humility cannot be instilled instantaneously but must be nurtured through sustained engagement with moral practices embedded in everyday life.

At the same time, this study acknowledges important limitations of habituation-based moral education. While linguistic discipline produces observable politeness, the depth of moral internalization varies among students. Some students comply primarily due to social expectations rather than intrinsic moral conviction. This finding echoes critical perspectives that caution against conflating behavioral conformity with moral maturity (Krettenauer, 2022; Gray et al., 2023; Hummel, 2025; Skitka et al., 2021). Habituation, when unaccompanied by reflection, risks producing disciplined behavior without ethical autonomy.

The pedagogical challenges identified in this study also reflect broader issues in contemporary pesantren education. Linguistic diversity among students, coupled with psychological factors such as fear and low confidence, complicates the process of moral habituation (Dražnik et al., 2024; Malik et al., 2021; Sari & Jauhari, 2022). While adaptive strategies such as gradual exposure and mentoring mitigate these challenges, they also highlight the necessity of creating reflective spaces where students can articulate and critically engage with the moral meanings underlying linguistic practices. Without such reflection, moral education risks remaining implicit and unevenly internalized.

In this regard, the findings support recent arguments that pesantren pedagogy must balance tradition with reflexivity. While habituation and exemplification remain powerful tools for moral formation, they need to be complemented by dialogical engagement that enables students to understand not only how to behave, but why such behavior matters in ethical and spiritual terms (Huda & Salem, 2022; Baidya & Baidya, 2023; Small, 2023; Hosaini et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the field of Islamic education by offering a conceptually grounded and empirically rich account of linguistic habituation as moral pedagogy. By situating language at the intersection of hidden curriculum, virtue ethics, and moral habitus, it demonstrates that *adab* formation is most effective when moral values are embedded in daily social practice, culturally resonant, and sustained over time. Linguistic habituation thus emerges as a powerful, though not unproblematic, pathway for cultivating ethical subjectivity in Islamic educational settings.

CONCLUSION

This study offers an original contribution to Islamic education research by reconceptualizing linguistic habituation as a pedagogical mechanism and hidden curriculum that functions as a moral infrastructure for the formation of adab. Building on this originality, the study contributes conceptually by extending hidden curriculum and virtue ethics theories, empirically by demonstrating how polite speech mediates moral self-regulation and humility, and practically by proposing a context-sensitive model of adab formation applicable across Islamic educational settings.

This study contributes to the literature on Islamic education in three significant ways. First, it offers a conceptual contribution by reframing linguistic habituation as a moral infrastructure and hidden curriculum within Islamic moral education, thereby extending existing theories of hidden curriculum and virtue ethics. Second, it provides an empirical contribution by demonstrating how polite speech practices function as mechanisms of moral self-regulation, humility (tawadhu'), and social harmony in a pesantren context. Third, it makes a practical contribution by proposing a context-sensitive model of adab formation that can inform pedagogical practices in diverse Islamic educational settings.

Scientifically, this study strengthens previous findings regarding the importance of habituation and cultural practices in character education, while simultaneously questioning perspectives that treat language solely as a neutral communicative tool. It introduces the concept of linguistic habituation as a pedagogical instrument and hidden curriculum that functions as a moral infrastructure within Islamic education. By integrating Islamic moral pedagogy, virtue ethics, and hidden curriculum theory, this research enriches scholarly discourse and provides a new conceptual lens for understanding how moral dispositions are formed through implicit and continuous practices among *santri*.

However, this study has several limitations. It is based on a small sample and a single case study, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Variations in demographic factors, such as data diversity, gender, and age, were not extensively represented. Future research involving larger and more diverse samples, multiple

pesantren contexts, and mixed-method approaches is recommended to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and transferability of linguistic habituation in Islamic moral education. Such studies may further validate and refine this model across broader educational settings. This reconceptualization represents a departure from prior studies that position polite language merely as an auxiliary component of character education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

Abdalla, M. (2025). Exploring *tarbiyah* in Islamic education: A critical review of the English- and Arabic-language literature. *Education Sciences, 15*(5), 559. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15050559

Abdurrohman, I., Mudana, I. W., & Ketut, I. (2025). The role of the hidden curriculum in fostering tolerance: A case study of public high schools in Mataram City. *International Journal, 15*, e2025160. https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1339599

Apple, M. (2023). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. In *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (pp. 434-452). Routledge.

Baidya, M., & Baidya, A. (2023). Importance of spiritual, moral and ethical values for the students of the 21st century. *International Journal of Creative Research & Thoughts, 11*(8), A1–A8. https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2308001.pdf

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE.

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 41*(5), 545–547. https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Cheng, Y., & Sikka, S. (2025). Exploring spiritual continuity: The *Du Jie* ceremony as a manifestation of religious identity and cultural resilience among the Yao ethnic group in Hunan, China. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, 20*(1). https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-008X/CGP/v20i01/97-118

Coldwell, D., Venter, R., Joosub, T., & Duh, H. (2022). The tension between SMEs' growth and sustainability in emerging and developed countries' internationalization: Towards a conceptual model. *Sustainability, 14*(8), 4418. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14084418

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE.

DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. AltaMira Press.

Downes, L., Kettle, M., O'Brien, P., & Tait, G. (2021). Responsibilisation and acceptable verbal behaviour in schools: Teachers and leaders arbitrating the boundaries of swearing. *Linguistics and Education*, *61*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2020.100898

Dražnik, T., Llompart-Esbert, J., & Bergroth, M. (2024). Student teachers' expressions of fear in handling linguistically diverse classrooms. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(8), 3127–3142. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2086258

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2014). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Eslami, Z. R., Larina, T. V., & Pashmforoosh, R. (2023). Identity, politeness and discursive practices in a changing world. *Russian Journal of Linguistics, 27*(1), 7–38. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-34051

Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). SAGE.

Gray, K., DiMaggio, N., Schein, C., & Kachanoff, F. (2023). The problem of purity in moral psychology. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 27*(3), 272–308. https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683221124741

Harahap, S. M., & Hamka, H. (2023). Investigating the roles of philosophy, culture, language and Islam in Angkola's local wisdom of 'Dalihan Na Tolu'. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *79*(1), 8164. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-hervorm_v79_n1_a8164

Haugh, M., Kádár, D. Z., & Reiter, R. M. (2022). Offence and morality: Pragmatic perspectives. *Language & Communication, 87*, 117–122. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2022.07.005

Hidayah, S. F., Wahidah, Z. S., Subriatin, E., Roviqoh, Q., & Khunaivi, H. (2023). Berbahasa Jawa *Krama*: Solusi pembentukan karakter

bersahabat/komunikatif siswa di madrasah ibtidaiyah. *Elementeris: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar Islam, 5*(2), 112–124. https://riset.unisma.ac.id/index.php/je/article/view/20572

Høgdal, C., Rasche, A., Schoeneborn, D. *et al.* Exploring Student Perceptions of the Hidden Curriculum in Responsible Management Education. *J Bus Ethics* 168, 173–193 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04221-9

Hosaini, H., Subaidi, S., Hamzah, M. Z. ., Simbolon, N. Y. ., & Sutiapermana, A. . (2024). "Tawheed-Based Pedagogy: Empowering Islamic Education Through Community Engagement And Pesantren Tradition". *Journal Of Human And Education (JAHE)*, *4*(4), 353–360. https://doi.org/10.31004/jh.v4i4.1220

Huda, M., & Salem, S. (2022). Understanding human behavior development with spirituality. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 26*(2), 238–268. https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v26i2.535

Hummel, S. (2025). Ethical and Responsible AI in Education: Situated Ethics for Democratic Learning. *Education Sciences*, *15*(12), 1594. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15121594

Irfani, F., Makbula, M. H., Fariduddin, E. I., & Aly, F. (2025). Moral education in Malaysian Islamic boarding schools: Challenges faced by educators in nurturing ethical imitation. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 6*(4), 618–634. https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.1967

Kokhichko, A. N. (2022). "Speech act" as a teaching method reflecting the moral side of students' speech behaviour. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6*(1). https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/136

Koutsouris, G., Mountford-Zimdars, A., & Dingwall, K. (2021). The 'ideal' higher education student: Understanding the hidden curriculum to enable institutional change. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 26*(2), 131–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2021.1909921

Krettenauer, T. (2022). Development of moral identity: From the age of responsibility to adult maturity. *Developmental Review, 65*, 101036. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2022.101036

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Li, G. (2025). "Reading the heart": Cosmology, ethics, and language of Chinese divination as therapeutic resources. *Review of General Psychology, 29*(2), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680241269290

Li, Y., & Li, Y. (2025). The paradox of cultural similarity: Teacher adaptation through the lens of linguistic, ethical, cultural, and historical friction. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 109*, 102295. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102295

Mauludin, M., Marwazi, M., & Fadhil, M. (2025). The implementation of moral education in strengthening students' discipline at Zulhijjah Islamic boarding school. *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and*

Multiculturalism, *7*(3), 1473–1495.
https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v7i3.617

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

MF, M. S. H., & Tasmin, M. A. A. (2025). Habitus of Harmony and Digital Adaptation: Interreligious Coexistence in Rural Indonesia during the Disruptive Era. *Religion*, *9*(2), 145-166. http://irep.iium.edu.my/124163/

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Mujahid, I. (2021). Islamic orthodoxy-based character education: Creating moderate Muslims in a modern pesantren in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies, 11*(2), 185–212. https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212

Netter, J. (2022). Primary school expectations: the invisible curriculum as a tool for understanding learning inequalities. *European Educational Research Journal*, *21*(6), 1041-1061. https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041211044004

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1).

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health, 42(5)*, 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Papakostas, C. (2025). Artificial intelligence in religious education: Ethical, pedagogical, and theological perspectives. *Religions, 16*(5), 563. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16050563

Park, J., & Bae, A. (2023). Toward a pedagogy of humility as experience. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *55*(2), 195-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2022.2104156

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Rajan. (2025). In Defence of Jain Philosophy and Religion: An Experimental and Comparative Approach Towards Peaceful Culture. *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40961-025-00379-y

Riaz, M., Baloch, F., Siddiqui, M., Ejaz, R., & Bashir, M. (2023). The Role of Islamic Education in Promoting Peace and Tolerance. *Al-Qanṭara, 9*(4), 308–327. https://alqantarajournal.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/366

Sætra, H. S., & Danaher, J. (2022). To each technology its own ethics: The problem of ethical proliferation. *Philosophy & Technology, 35*(4), 93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00591-7

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Skitka, L. J., Hanson, B. E., Morgan, G. S., & Wisneski, D. C. (2021). The psychology of moral conviction. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *72*(1), 347-366. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-063020-030612

Small, J. L. (Ed.). (2023). *Making meaning: Embracing spirituality, faith, religion, and life purpose in student affairs*. Taylor & Francis.

Stake, R. E. (2015). *The art of case study research*. SAGE.

Subandi, G., Eriyanti, R. W., Karmiyati, D., Nurfaisal, N., & Widodo, J. (2025). A response to the character crisis: Can a digital Islamic character education based on local wisdom be the solution?. *Perspectives in Education*, *43*(3), 236-253. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-persed_v43_n3_a17

Tomar, P. (2025). Bridging ancient wisdom and modern practice: Applying *subhāṣitāni* for ethical decision-making in action learning frameworks. *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767333.2025.2563840

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications* (6th ed.). SAGE.

Zainuri, M., Mu'alimin, M. A., & Umam, K. (2025). Boarding school and character education: Exploring moral development in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. *Benchmarking,* *9*(1), 130–138. https://doi.org/10.30821/benchmarking.v9i1.24575

Zammit, L. (2025). Promoting ethical online behaviour: the perspectives of educators, experts and policymakers on cyberbullying in Maltese secondary schools. *London Review of Education*, *23*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.23.1.10

Zuhara, E. (2023). Moral Education Methods in Sufistic Counseling From the Perspective of Al-Ghazali and Ibnu Miskawaih. *The Lunarian*, *1*(1), 22–30. Retrieved from https://thelunarian.com/journal/article/view/7