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Internalizing Moral Values through *Nadhoman Hidayatul Muta'allim*

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Abstract: This study examines how students encounter, interpret, and practice moral values through the collective recitation of verses from *Hidayatul Muta'allim*. A qualitative single case study drew on direct observations, documentation, and in-depth interviews with the school head, teachers, and students. Evidence was compared across sources and methods. Teachers introduced values through recitation and explanation. Students associated rhythm with enjoyment and found the Indonesian and Javanese translations, along with teacher explanations, helpful for understanding the verses. Their accounts of greeting teachers and speaking politely provided preliminary indications of moral practice. The study examines a local recitation tradition in primary education and distinguishes engagement with the activity, perceived understanding of its messages, and reported enactment of values. The findings clarify how rhythmic recitation and teacher guidance work together in a routine for teaching moral values. They also refine the interpretation of value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization by distinguishing the evidence available for each process. This distinction helps educators assess what students take from the verses and identify where further observation is needed to understand how they apply them.

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana siswa mengenal, memaknai, dan mempraktikkan nilai moral melalui pelantunan bersama syair Hidayatul Muta'allim. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus tunggal kualitatif dengan observasi langsung, dokumentasi sekolah, dan wawancara mendalam dengan kepala madrasah, guru, serta siswa. Bukti dibandingkan antarsumber dan antarteknik pengumpulan data. Guru memperkenalkan nilai melalui pelantunan dan penjelasan. Siswa mengaitkan irama dengan pengalaman belajar yang menyenangkan. Terjemahan bahasa Indonesia dan Jawa serta penjelasan guru membantu mereka memahami syair. Tuturan siswa tentang kebiasaan menyapa guru dan berbicara santun memberikan indikasi awal praktik nilai moral. Penelitian ini mengkaji tradisi pelantunan syair dalam pendidikan dasar dengan membedakan keterlibatan siswa, pemahaman yang mereka laporkan, dan penerapan nilai dalam interaksi sehari-hari. Temuan memperjelas peran pelantunan berirama dan bimbingan guru dalam pembelajaran akhlak. Kajian ini memperkaya penafsiran transformasi nilai, transaksi nilai, dan transinternalisasi dengan menunjukkan jenis bukti yang mendukung penafsiran setiap proses. Pembedaan ini membantu guru menilai sejauh mana siswa memahami pesan syair dan menentukan kapan pengamatan lanjutan diperlukan untuk melihat bagaimana mereka menerapkan nilai tersebut dalam berbagai situasi di dalam maupun di luar ruang kelas madrasah.*

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INTRODUCTION

In Islamic primary education, a central challenge is helping children connect what they learn about proper conduct with the choices they make in everyday school life. Internalization refers to the process through which learners come to understand, accept, and act on values they encounter in their social and educational environments (Munif, 2017). Within Islamic education, this process is closely tied to akhlak, which concerns moral conduct and the cultivation of character in one's relationship with God and with others (Mustofa & Nasucha, 2023; Sahnan, 2018). The study of adab, which includes proper conduct toward teachers, peers, and knowledge, gives these broader commitments a practical focus (Halstead, 2007; Naim & Sariman, 2022). From this perspective, the value of learning is reflected in how knowledge guides conduct and benefits others (Haikal & Atqia, 2021). The Qur'an presents the Prophet Muhammad as an example for believers (Qur'an 33:21), a principle that informs the place of moral exemplarity in Islamic education (Alfiyan, 2021; Susanti & Sobri, 2023).

Madrasah ibtidaiyah, or Islamic primary schools, provide a setting where children can encounter and practice these values in everyday interactions. Indonesian scholarship on early moral education has highlighted the role of educators, repeated practice, and integrating moral learning into classroom activities (Kulsum et al., 2016; Mufarohah et al., 2018; Oktaviana & Munastiwi, 2022). The broader literature on school-based character education also highlights the practices schools use to pursue character development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Indonesian discussions of character education have also raised concerns about opportunities for student initiative and about how schools balance academic development with attention to conduct (Al Asadullah & Nurhalin, 2021; Wibowo, 2021). Studies of adab offer a more specific starting point by examining values such as respect for teachers, sincerity of intention, and perseverance in seeking knowledge (Sriwahyuni, 2024; Umar, 2021; Wahid et al., 2022). In a primary school, the question is how children make sense of these values and what evidence connects that understanding with their conduct. A child may recite a verse accurately, explain its message, or follow a teacher's instruction. Each response provides different evidence of the internalization process.

One practice through which this process can be examined is *Nadhoman*, understood here as the rhythmic recitation of didactic verse. *Hidayatul Muta'allim*, a work by K. H. Taufiqul Hakim, presents teachings associated with al-Zarnuji's Ta'lim al-Muta'allim in verse and includes Indonesian and Javanese renderings (Sriwahyuni, 2024). In the madrasah examined in this study, students recite the verses together before formal lessons, and teachers explain their meaning. This routine brings several elements into the same learning activity: rhythmic repetition, access to the text in familiar languages, and teacher guidance on its moral content. Experimental research has shown that singing can support short-term recall of unfamiliar phrases in adult language learners (Ludke et al., 2014). That finding offers a reason to examine the role of rhythm and repetition in recalling verses. Whether children understand a verse as guidance for action, and how they relate it to everyday situations, are separate empirical questions.

Previous studies provide a basis for asking those questions. Research on Ta'lim al-Muta'allim has examined character education and students' ethical conduct in Islamic learning settings (Alfiyan, 2021; Naim & Sariman, 2022; Wahid et al., 2022). Studies specifically on *Hidayatul Muta'allim* have examined students' understanding of akhlakul karimah and their conduct in pesantren settings (Sriwahyuni, 2024; Umar, 2021). Rizal and Kurniawan (2023) also examined the text's use for moral education in a formal Islamic lower secondary school. Taken together, these studies establish the text's relevance across educational settings. They leave room for a closer account of the learning process at the primary level, particularly how collective recitation, teachers' explanations, and children's interpretations relate to specific instances of conduct. The gap therefore concerns what happens between hearing a moral message and putting it into practice.

To examine this process, the study draws on the distinction between value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization used in Indonesian Islamic education scholarship (Munif, 2017; Mustofa & Nasucha, 2023). Value transformation concerns how teachers introduce and explain a value. Value transformation concerns how students respond to it, discuss it, and relate it to familiar situations. Transinternalization focuses on evidence that students are beginning to take up a value as a guide for their conduct. These distinctions guide the analysis while leaving open how the processes overlap and which aspects the available evidence can substantiate. For example, participation in recitation can indicate engagement, whereas an account of a student choosing to act courteously without a reminder can provide a basis for exploring emerging moral practice.

This qualitative case study examines how *Hidayatul Muta'allim* is used to cultivate moral values through *Nadhoman* in an Islamic primary school. It addresses three questions: (1) How do teachers introduce and explain moral values during the *Hidayatul Muta'allim* recitation routine? (2) How do students respond to and interpret the moral messages conveyed through the verses and teachers' explanations? (3) What indications of moral practice emerge in students' everyday school interactions, and what limits interpreting those indications as evidence of internalization?

The study contributes a situated account of how a local recitation tradition connects moral instruction with opportunities for interpretation and practice. By distinguishing participation, understanding, and enactment, it clarifies what teachers and researchers can reasonably infer from children's responses to a recurring moral learning activity.

METHOD

Research Design and Setting

This study used a qualitative single-case design to examine how moral values were introduced, interpreted, and practiced through *Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman* at MIMA 30 Bustanul Ulum. The case was bounded by one Islamic primary school and its routine of reciting and discussing the verses before formal lessons. The school was selected because this routine provided an opportunity to examine how collective recitation and teachers' explanations brought moral instruction into everyday school practice. The unit of analysis was the process of

moral learning associated with the routine. The head of the madrasah, teachers, and students provided different perspectives on that process. The qualitative design was appropriate because it allowed the study to examine the meanings participants assigned to the activity and to interpret those accounts in relation to school practices (Safarudin et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2018).

Participants and Data Collection

Participants included the head of the madrasah, teachers involved in the recitation routine, and participating students. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and a review of school documentation. These methods provided complementary evidence about how the activity was conducted, how participants understood it, and how the school documented its implementation (Busetto et al., 2020).

Direct observation focused on the sequence of the pre-lesson activity, including collective recitation, the use of rhythm and repetition, teachers' explanations of the verses, and students' responses. The interviews addressed different aspects of the activity according to each participant's role. The head of the madrasah discussed the routine's purpose and its place in school life. Teachers described how they introduced the moral messages and connected them to expected conduct. Students described their experiences of recitation, their understanding of the verses and teachers' explanations, and examples of how they related the messages to everyday interactions. School documentation provided contextual evidence of how the routine was implemented and how *Hidayatul Muta'allim* was used as teaching material.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was organized around three concepts introduced in the preceding section: *value transformation*, *value transaction*, and *transinternalization*. Value transformation concerned how teachers conveyed and explained the moral messages in the verses. Value transaction concerned how students responded to those messages, expressed their understanding, and connected them to familiar situations. Transinternalization focused on indications that students were beginning to use a value to guide their conduct, particularly in situations where they reportedly acted without a direct prompt. The three concepts provided a basis for interpreting evidence from the case. Their use requires a clear account of how the researcher moved from the original material to the reported interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2024).

The interpretation distinguished participation in the recitation from understanding the verses and from reported or observed conduct. For example, enthusiastic participation was treated as evidence of engagement. A student's explanation of a moral message provided evidence of understanding, while an account of greeting a teacher or speaking politely indicated moral practice. The interpretation of such conduct depended on its context, including whether it was directly observed or reported in an interview and whether the account indicated that the student acted without prompting. This distinction kept the analysis focused on what the qualitative evidence could establish about internalization.

Trustworthiness

The study used source and method triangulation (Safarudin et al., 2023). Source triangulation compared the accounts of the head of the madrasah, teachers, and students. Method triangulation related interview accounts to observations of the recitation routine and relevant school documentation. Each source was interpreted according to what it could establish. For example, documentation of collective recitation supported claims about implementation, while students' explanations supported claims about their understanding. We interpreted reports of courteous conduct as accounts of moral practice and distinguished them from behavior the researcher recorded directly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

At the Islamic primary school studied, students recited *Hidayatul Muta'allim* together before formal lessons and listened to teachers explain the verses. Observations and school documentation showed how the routine was organized. Interviews with a teacher, the head of the madrasah, and students provided different perspectives on its purpose, accessibility, and relevance to everyday conduct. The findings are presented under three analytical categories: value transformation, value transaction, and emerging indications of transinternalization. Table 1 shows the evidence supporting each interpretation.

Table 1. Stages of Moral Value Internalization through *Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman* at an Islamic Primary School

Analytical category	Evidence from the case	Interpretation
Value transformation	Observations and school documentation showed collective recitation before lessons and teacher explanations of the verses. The teacher identified discipline, responsibility, and respect for teachers as intended learning outcomes.	Recitation and explanation gave students repeated opportunities to encounter and learn about moral values.
Value transaction	Students joined the collective recitation and commented on the accessibility of the Indonesian and Javanese translations and the clarity of the teacher's explanations.	The evidence shows participation and perceived accessibility. The interview excerpts provide limited detail on how students discussed or interpreted particular moral messages.
Emerging indications of transinternalization	One student reported greeting teachers when meeting them on the road. Another reported speaking politely when addressing a teacher. The teacher described students applying the guidance in classrooms and elsewhere at school.	These accounts provide examples of conduct consistent with the values taught. The interview evidence leaves open how often the conduct occurred, whether it required prompting, and how it developed over time.

Note. T1 = teacher, HM1 = head of the madrasah, and S1 and S2 = students. These codes replace participant names in the original manuscript.

Value Transformation through Recitation and Explanation

The observations showed that teachers introduced moral values by combining collective recitation with explanations of the verses, advice, and examples of conduct. The values addressed included respect for teachers, humility (*tawadhu'*), discipline, responsibility, and earnestness in seeking knowledge. School documentation located the collective recitation at a mosque near the madrasah before classroom instruction began. The teacher described the timing and purpose of the routine: "*Every morning before lessons begin, we carry out an activity of reading and learning the meaning of Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman by KH. Taufiqul Hakim from Darul Falah Islamic Boarding School in Jepara. We do this every day so that students develop disciplined, responsible characters and respect their teachers*." (T1)

The head of the madrasah confirmed that collective recitation and study of the verses formed part of the pre-lesson routine: "*As the principal, I strongly support activities that benefit students. Before classroom learning begins, we start with reading and learning Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman together*." (HM1)

The students described what drew them into the activity. One highlighted the rhythm, while the other commented on the experience of reciting with classmates: "*I really like this activity, ma'am, because it is read with an interesting rhythm*." (S1). "*Reciting Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman together feels very enthusiastic, ma'am*." (S2)

The adult accounts explain why the school made recitation a daily practice and which values teachers intended to introduce. The student accounts show how rhythm and collective participation made the routine engaging. Teachers' explanations explicitly connected the recited verses to moral instruction.

Value Transaction through Participation and Interpretation

Students participated in the collective recitation and listened as teachers explained the text. The teacher described this guidance as extending to examples of how students might act in everyday situations. The values discussed included speaking politely, respecting teachers, taking responsibility, and helping others. "*Teachers do not merely deliver material; they also guide students to apply these values in everyday life*." (T1)

The head of the madrasah described the routine as one part of a broader effort that also involved advice, role modeling, and repeated practice: "*Although the madrasah's facilities are still limited, teachers try to use the available time to shape students' character through habituation, role modeling, advice, and experiencing the moral values contained in Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman*." (HM1)

The two students pointed to different features that made the material accessible. One referred to the Indonesian and Javanese translations, while the other highlighted the teacher's explanation: "*I like learning Nadhoman Hidayatul Muta'allim because it contains Indonesian and Javanese translations, so it is easy to understand, ma'am*." (S1). "*The teacher's explanation is easy to understand, ma'am*." (S2)

School documentation showed the teacher using *Hidayatul Muta'allim* during the explanation and students taking part in the collective recitation. The student excerpts identify two ways they accessed the text's meaning: translations and the teacher's explanation. The evidence presented for value transaction therefore centers on students' participation and their responses to these forms of guidance. It offers less detail about how students explained a specific value in their own words or discussed it with a teacher.

Emerging Indications of Transinternalization in Everyday Conduct

The teacher reported that students remembered the guidance and applied it in classrooms and elsewhere at the madrasah: "*After the students learned the meaning of Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman, praise be to Allah, they always remember what the teacher advised them. The students immediately practice it in the classroom and throughout the madrasah environment*." (T1)

The head of the madrasah emphasized the continuing role of teacher encouragement in linking learning with moral conduct: "*Teachers always encourage students to remain enthusiastic about learning while developing behavior characterized by akhlakul karimah*." (HM1)

The students offered two specific examples of conduct consistent with the values addressed in the routine. One described greeting teachers outside the classroom, while the other described how she spoke when addressing a teacher: "*I am very happy when I meet a male or female teacher on the road; I always greet them*." (S1). "*When I speak in front of my female teacher, I always speak politely, ma'am*." (S2)

The manuscript's summary of school documentation also refers to respectful speech, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and mutual respect. The interview excerpts provide more specific evidence for two of these practices: greeting teachers and speaking courteously. The first example extends the account of moral practice beyond the immediate recitation setting. The second describes how a student reported putting courtesy into practice during an interaction with a teacher.

These accounts were interpreted as emerging indications of moral practice consistent with the values taught. The teacher described a pattern of application across school settings, and the students provided examples from their own experience. The evidence presented does not establish whether these behaviors occurred consistently without reminders, how they changed over time, or how much the recitation contributed alongside teacher guidance and established school routines.

Discussion

The findings show how a daily *Nadhoman* routine gave students at an Islamic primary school opportunities to encounter moral values, understand the verses through translations and teachers' explanations, and relate those messages to familiar forms of conduct. Observation and school documentation showed that collective recitation and explanation were part of the same pre-lesson routine. The students' accounts added a distinction that matters for interpreting the practice. One student identified the rhythm as a reason for enjoying the activity. In contrast,

the students pointed to the Indonesian and Javanese translations and the teacher's explanation as features that made the content accessible. This distinction helps explain what each element contributed to the learning experience. Rhythm supported engagement, as students described, while translation and explanation gave them access to the verses' meaning.

From Participation to Understanding

The concept of *value transformation* helps explain how teachers used the routine to introduce values such as respect for teachers, humility, discipline, and responsibility. Collective recitation gave students repeated encounters with the verses, and teachers' explanations made their moral content explicit. This finding is consistent with discussions of character education that distinguish moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Bali & Fadilah, 2019; Damariswara et al., 2021; Mainuddin et al., 2023). In the present case, the clearest evidence concerns the introduction and accessibility of moral content. Students said the explanations were easy to understand, but their accounts offered limited detail on how they understood particular values or applied them when making a choice.

Interpreting *value transactions* requires a similar distinction. Students' enjoyment of the rhythm and enthusiasm for collective recitation show how they experienced the activity. Their comments about translations and explanations indicate that they could follow the material. Evidence of reciprocal interpretation would include a student explaining a verse in their own words, responding to a concrete moral situation, or revising an interpretation after discussion with a teacher. The available excerpts give a clearer account of engagement and perceived understanding than of this exchange of meanings. Likewise, enjoyment of recitation gives limited grounds for inferring *moral feeling*. Such an inference would require evidence that students cared about the values expressed, understood why those values mattered to others, or committed to acting on them.

Everyday Conduct and Emerging Internalization

The student accounts of greeting teachers on the road and speaking politely when addressing a teacher provide the most concrete examples of conduct consistent with the moral guidance discussed during the routine. These accounts can be read in relation to the distinction among moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action discussed by Izzati et al. (2019). The example of greeting a teacher on the road is particularly relevant because it places the reported conduct outside the immediate recitation setting. The teacher's account likewise describes students applying the guidance in classrooms and elsewhere at the madrasah. Together, these accounts suggest that the values addressed during the routine were recognizable in students' descriptions of everyday interactions.

Interpreting these examples as *emerging indications of transinternalization* keeps the claim proportionate to the evidence. Self-determination theory distinguishes conduct undertaken in response to external expectations from conduct guided by a value that a person has come to endorse (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This distinction helps identify what remains open in the present case. The reported actions align with courtesy and respect. Still, the students' reasons for acting, the role of reminders, and the consistency of their conduct over time are only partly documented. Existing school expectations and teachers' guidance also offer

plausible explanations for these practices. The evidence therefore supports a bounded interpretation of moral practice within the case.

Figure 1 brings together the three analytical categories used to interpret moral learning through *Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman*. Collective recitation and teacher explanations introduced students to the moral messages in the verses. Students' accounts of enjoying the rhythm and following the translations and explanations indicate engagement and perceived understanding. Their reports of greeting teachers and speaking courteously provide preliminary evidence of moral practice. The figure distinguishes these forms of evidence so that participation, understanding, and reported conduct can be interpreted separately.

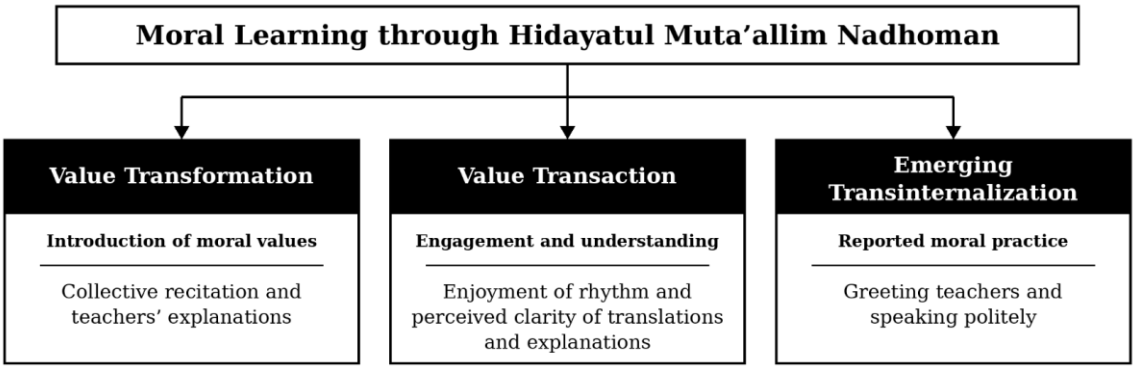


Figure 1. *Moral Learning through Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman*

Figure 1 illustrates how moral learning through *Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman* was interpreted across three analytical categories. Value transformation describes how collective recitation and teachers' explanations introduced students to the moral messages in the verses. Value transaction captures students' responses to the activity. They reported enjoying the rhythm and finding the translations and teachers' explanations helpful in understanding the verses. Emerging transinternalization refers to preliminary indications of moral practice, such as students' accounts of greeting teachers and speaking politely in everyday interactions. These categories distinguish participation, perceived understanding, and reported conduct, providing a basis for examining how students relate the values taught during recitation to their interactions beyond it.

Interpreting *Nadhoman* within Islamic Character Education

Indonesian educational scholarship provides another perspective on the relationship among understanding, appreciation, and practice. Discussions of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational thought emphasize the relationship between thought, feeling, and conduct in character formation (Gantina et al., 2025; Thaariq & Karima, 2023). In this light, *ngerti*, *ngroso*, and *nglakoni* offer a useful comparison for interpreting the movement from encountering a moral message to considering its meaning and putting it into practice. These ideas illuminate aspects of the case without requiring a one-to-one correspondence with value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization. For instance, a student's enjoyment of rhythmic recitation says more about the learning experience than about whether the student appreciates the moral value expressed in the verse.

Previous research has examined the relationship between students' understanding of *Hidayatul Muta'alimin* and their moral conduct in an Islamic upper secondary school (Rizal & Kurniawan, 2023). The present study extends this line of inquiry to Islamic primary education by examining how collective recitation and teachers' explanations help students engage with the verses and relate their messages to everyday conduct. Earlier studies of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* have examined the use of classical texts in character formation and the development of discipline in pesantren settings (Desfitria et al., 2024; Fajrin & Taufikurrahman, 2021). The present study adds an account from an Islamic primary school where teachers used a related text in a recurring group activity. In this setting, the verse form, the Indonesian and Javanese translations, and teacher guidance made the text available to children in several ways. This matters for values such as *istiqamah*, or steadfastness, which can be introduced through a verse and explained in relation to situations children encounter while learning. The case shows how the school made the text part of its daily teaching practice. The extent to which students took up individual values remains an empirical question.

Contribution, Implications, and Limitations

The study's contribution lies in distinguishing engagement with a recitation routine, access to its moral content, and reported enactment of values within the same case. This distinction offers a more precise way to examine moral learning through *Nadhoman*. It also clarifies the teacher's role. The students' accounts point to translations and oral explanations as ways of accessing meaning. At the same time, the adults described guidance and role modeling as part of a wider effort to cultivate conduct. For practice, teachers could pair selected verses with brief discussion of situations children recognize, such as responding respectfully to a classmate or carrying out a responsibility without being reminded. Asking students to explain how a verse applies in a specific situation would give teachers a clearer basis for assessing what students understood.

The findings are limited to one school and the available evidence. Observations and documentation chiefly describe the recitation routine. The clearest examples of conduct beyond that routine come from interviews, where responses may reflect students' perceptions of what adults expect. The design also offers limited grounds for distinguishing the contribution of rhythm or repetition from those of translation, teacher modeling, and school expectations. Future research could follow students across classroom and informal settings, record episodes of interpretation and conduct over time, and examine occasions when students act independently, need reminders, or interpret the same verse differently. This would help establish how particular values are understood and enacted across situations.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study found that the *Hidayatul Muta'allim Nadhoman* routine gave students at an Islamic primary school recurring opportunities to encounter moral values and relate them to everyday conduct. Students associated the rhythm and collective recitation with enjoyment, and they identified the Indonesian and Javanese translations and teachers' explanations as helpful for

understanding the verses. Their accounts of greeting teachers outside the classroom and speaking courteously provide early indications that some students acted in ways consistent with the values taught. These findings highlight the role of translation and teacher guidance in a practice whose most visible feature is rhythmic recitation.

The study extends previous research on Islamic character education by showing how a local recitation tradition can bring moral instruction into the daily routine of a primary school. Its analytical contribution is to distinguish engagement with recitation, understanding of moral messages, and enactment of values in everyday interactions. This distinction refines the interpretation of value transformation, value transaction, and transinternalization. In particular, enjoyment indicates engagement with the learning activity, while reported acts of courtesy provide preliminary evidence of moral practice. Interpreting such conduct as sustained internalization would require evidence that students understood the reasons for their actions and acted consistently across situations.

The study was limited to a small group of participants at one Islamic primary school. The clearest examples of conduct beyond the recitation routine came from interviews, which limits what can be inferred about how consistently students acted without prompting. Future research should involve more students across several madrasahs and follow their interpretations and conduct over time in both classroom and informal settings. In practice, teachers can pair selected verses with short discussions of situations children recognize and invite students to explain how the values might guide their choices.

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