



Mukhayyam Program: A Strategy for Strengthening Islamic Character among Junior High School Students

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Abstract

Moral, social, and technological challenges require educational strategies that can strengthen students' Islamic character. One program developed as a solution is the *mukhayyam* program, which integrates habituation of worship, role modeling, and religious activities within the educational environment. This study aims to analyze the role of *mukhayyam* activities in fostering students' Islamic character, identify the character values developed, and examine the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, Islamic Education teachers, *mukhayyam* coordinators, and students. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that *mukhayyam* activities contribute significantly to the development of Islamic character through worship habituation, exemplary behavior, and structured religious activities. The character values developed include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, independence, Islamic brotherhood, good morals, cleanliness awareness, and consistency (*istiqamah*). The study implies that the *mukhayyam* program can serve as an effective Islamic educational strategy for strengthening students' Islamic character in a holistic manner.

INTRODUCTION

Education, in essence, functions not only as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a means of developing students' personalities, character, and values that guide their lives. In educational theory, pedagogy is understood as an educational practice concerned with guiding, directing, and supporting students, whereas pedagogics refers to the systematic study of educational theories, principles, and objectives (Engkizar et al., 2026; Mulholland, 2023). From this perspective, education is not solely oriented toward academic achievement but also aims to develop individuals intellectually, morally, socially, and spiritually. Therefore, educational success should be measured not only by students' mastery of knowledge but also by their ability to internalize values reflected in their everyday behavior.

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In the context of Islamic education, the educational process is directed toward developing individuals who possess faith, demonstrate noble character, and are capable of fulfilling their roles as servants of Allah and *khalifah* (stewards) on Earth. Islamic education has been defined as physical and spiritual guidance aimed at developing an exemplary personality, while it has also been described as a conscious effort to cultivate personality in accordance with Islamic teachings (Hambali, 2016). Furthermore, Islamic education aims to develop individuals who understand their relationships with Allah, fellow human beings, and their environment. Thus, Islamic education focuses not only on cognitive development but also on the internalization of spiritual, moral, and social values that form the foundation of students' Islamic character.

The urgency of developing Islamic character has become increasingly pronounced amid globalization, modernization, and digital technological developments that influence students' mindsets and behavior. Various phenomena, including declining honesty, discipline, responsibility, social awareness, and respect for religious values, indicate that character education remains a challenge in the educational sector. Islamic education plays a strategic role in strengthening students' character in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution through the internalization of Islamic values in the educational process (Ramadhani et al., 2024). Similarly, Islamic education can serve as a moral safeguard for younger generations in confronting globalization, which tends to erode religious values. Therefore, educational institutions are required to implement development programs that focus not only on academic achievement but also on strengthening students' Islamic character.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Islamic character can be developed through habituation programs and religious activities in schools. Islamic education contributes to the development of students' religiosity, discipline, and sense of responsibility (Maideja et al., 2023). Religious activities integrated into the school environment can strengthen students' Islamic identity and moral values (Noboru et al., 2021). Islamic Education plays a role in developing individuals with noble character and a commitment to Islamic values. Islamic Religious Education teachers also play a crucial role in developing students' discipline through habituation and role modeling (Fakhruddin et al., 2024; Muswara & Zalnur, 2019). Furthermore, experiential religious activities can enhance students' sense of responsibility and social awareness. Islamic camp programs can strengthen students' religious values and independence (Awanda, 2025; Pratama, 2022; Suwahyu, 2025). Character development through extracurricular activities conducted outside the classroom can improve students' cooperation and leadership skills. Intensive religious development activities contribute to the formation of students' *akhlakul karimah* (Alfiannor et al., 2025). Similarly, habitual worship programs can strengthen students' *istiqamah* and sense of responsibility. A school environment that supports Islamic values also positively influences students' character development (Maksimović et al., 2022; Sholekah et al., 2025). Overall, these studies demonstrate that religious activities play an important role in shaping Islamic character, although they are implemented through different contexts, approaches, and programs.

One program developed to support the formation of Islamic character is *mukhayyam*. Conceptually, *mukhayyam* is a developmental program that integrates spiritual, educational, social, and leadership activities within a structured environment that promotes togetherness. Through various activities, such as congregational worship, Islamic mentoring, character development, group collaboration, and self-reflection, students gain learning experiences that encompass not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor domains. This program is expected to instill religious values, discipline, responsibility, independence, *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, and leadership, all of which constitute essential elements of Islamic character.

In educational practice, *mukhayyam* has been implemented as part of character development programs for junior high school students. The program is designed to provide students with direct experiences of practicing Islamic values through various activities that emphasize habitual worship, moral development, and social skills. Through these activities, students not only acquire theoretical religious knowledge but also have opportunities to apply it in their daily lives. Therefore, *mukhayyam* represents a form of character education that combines value-based learning with authentic experiences encountered directly by students.

Previous studies have examined the roles of Islamic education, habitual worship practices, religious activities, and character development programs in shaping students' character. However, most studies have focused on Islamic Religious Education instruction, teacher role modeling, short-term Islamic boarding school programs, religious habituation, or religious activities in general. Research specifically examining how *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of Islamic character among junior high school students through habituation, role modeling, and direct student experiences remains relatively limited (Alfath, 2020; Devi Yusrila Sinaga, 2023). Accordingly, a research gap exists in the need for a deeper understanding of the contribution of *mukhayyam* to the development of students' Islamic character.

The novelty of this study lies in its examination of *mukhayyam* as a strategy for strengthening Islamic character through a direct experiential learning approach among junior high school students. Unlike previous studies, which have predominantly examined character development through formal instruction or religious habituation in schools, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the role of *mukhayyam*, the Islamic character values developed through the program, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. Furthermore, this study employs a case study approach to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how *mukhayyam* is implemented within the context of Islamic education.

This study makes theoretical and practical contributions to the development of character-based Islamic education. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on the effectiveness of experiential development programs in shaping students' Islamic character. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for schools, teachers, and educational administrators in designing character-strengthening programs that are more contextually relevant, participatory, and sustainable. In addition, the findings are expected to encourage the optimization of *mukhayyam* as an educational strategy that not only enhances students' religious understanding but also strengthens their religiosity, *akhlakul karimah*, sense of responsibility, independence, and social awareness in everyday life.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the role of *mukhayyam* in shaping the Islamic character of junior high school students, identify the character values developed through the program, and examine the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation.

METHODS

This study was designed to analyze in depth the role of *mukhayyam* activities in shaping the Islamic character of junior high school students. The research focused on the implementation of *mukhayyam*, the Islamic character values developed through the activities, and the factors that support and hinder their implementation. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, the study employed a qualitative approach that enabled the researcher to explore informants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of *mukhayyam*. Qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups assign to social and educational phenomena (Takona, 2024). Therefore, this approach was considered

appropriate for examining the development of Islamic character through *mukhayyam* within the context of Islamic education.

Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand the phenomenon of Islamic character development in depth within its natural, real-life context. Meanwhile, the case study design was adopted because the research focused on a specific program, namely *mukhayyam*, which was examined intensively at a single research site. A case study is a research strategy used to understand a phenomenon in depth within its real-life context (Kächele, 2018; Mizukoshi, 2023). The selection of a case study design enabled the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of *mukhayyam* and its contribution to the development of students' Islamic character.

Data Sources

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from informants involved in the implementation of *mukhayyam*, namely the school principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, the *mukhayyam* program coordinator, and students. The informants were selected using purposive sampling because they were considered to possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research focus (Engkizar et al., 2025; Robinson, 2023). A total of 10 informants participated in this study. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various documents related to *mukhayyam*, including activity programs, implementation schedules, activity reports, photographic documentation, school archives, and scholarly literature relevant to Islamic character development.

Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary research instrument (human instrument), responsible for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the research data (Maxwell, 2021). In addition, this study employed an observation guide, a structured interview guide, and documentation as supporting instruments. The interview guide was developed based on the research focus, which encompassed the implementation of *mukhayyam*, the Islamic character values developed through the activities, and the factors supporting and hindering their implementation. These instruments were used to obtain in-depth, focused data relevant to the research objectives.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted using a non-participant observation technique, in which the researcher did not directly participate in the activities being observed but instead acted as an observer of the activities taking place. Observation enables researchers to obtain data on behaviors, activities, and interactions occurring naturally in the field (Bingham, 2023). Through observation, the researcher examined the implementation of *mukhayyam*, interactions among participants, and various activities related to the development of Islamic character.

Structured interviews were conducted using a previously prepared interview guide. This technique was employed to obtain in-depth information about the informants' experiences, perspectives, and understanding of *mukhayyam*. Structured interviews enable researchers to obtain systematic data aligned with the objectives of the study. In addition, documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data through various supporting materials, including activity photographs, interview recordings, program archives, and other relevant documents. Documentation serves as a data source that can strengthen the validity of research findings (Govindasamy et al., 2024; Qureshi, 2022).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which comprises three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the data obtained from the field in accordance with the research focus. Subsequently, the condensed data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions, categories, and research themes to facilitate understanding and analysis. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions continuously throughout the research process to ensure that the findings were supported by valid and consistent data. This analytical model was selected because it facilitates a systematic and in-depth understanding of the relationships among the data (Bingham, 2023b; Lungu, 2022).

Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the school principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, the *mukhayyam* program coordinator, and students. Meanwhile, method triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation concerning the same phenomenon. Triangulation is an effective strategy for enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings (Bryniarska, 2024). Accordingly, triangulation was employed to ensure that the collected data accurately reflected actual conditions in the field and could be scientifically justified.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that *mukhayyam* plays an important role in the process of shaping students' Islamic character. Through various activities that integrate habitual worship practices, role modeling, religious guidance, group collaboration, and direct experiences in social and spiritual life, students have opportunities to internalize Islamic values more concretely. The findings suggest that *mukhayyam* not only provides religious understanding at the cognitive level but also encourages the development of attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic character in everyday life. The character values developed through this program include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), and *istiqamah* (steadfastness in practicing Islamic values). Character development occurs through structured habituation throughout the program and is supported by interactions among students, teachers, and mentors in a conducive environment. Therefore, this discussion focuses on the Islamic character values developed through *mukhayyam* and the processes through which they emerge, based on findings from field observations, interviews, and documentation.

The Development of Students' Islamic Character through *Mukhayyam* Religious Character

Religious character is one of the main values developed through *mukhayyam*. This character is cultivated through habitual worship practices, the delivery of Islamic educational materials, and direct religious practices conducted throughout the program. Based on the interviews, one informant explained:

"Religious character is developed through habitual worship practices, the delivery of Islamic educational materials, and direct practice during the activities. In my opinion, these approaches have made some students more enthusiastic about participating in congregational prayers and more active in religious activities at school, although the extent of change varies among students." (Teacher Informant).

This statement indicates that *mukhayyam* not only provides theoretical religious understanding but also encourages students to practice religious values in their everyday lives. This finding is supported by another informant, who stated:

"Mukhayyam provides students with a more intensive spiritual experience, making them more accustomed to performing congregational prayers and participating more effectively in religious activities." (Mukhayyam Program Coordinator).

From the students' perspective, one informant stated:

"Sometimes I still forget, but I do it more often than before." (Grade IX Student Informant).

Meanwhile, another student explained:

"After participating in mukhayyam, I pray on time more often and read the Quran more frequently." (Grade VIII Student Informant).

The observation findings indicate that congregational prayers, Quran recitation, *muroja'ah* (memorization review), *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), and *qiyam al-layl* (night prayer) were conducted in an orderly manner, although some students still required guidance to achieve greater concentration during worship. In addition, most students reported experiencing a stronger spiritual connection with Allah, as reflected in improved worship habits and greater awareness of remembering Allah in their daily lives (Alatise & Akinfolarin, 2025; Kassymova et al., 2025). These findings indicate that *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of religious character through habitual worship practices and direct spiritual experiences.

Discipline

Discipline is a character value cultivated through the implementation of rules and activity schedules that all participants are required to follow throughout *mukhayyam*. Based on the interviews, one informant explained:

"Discipline is developed by requiring students to participate in all scheduled activities and providing guidance to students who arrive late or demonstrate a lack of discipline." (Mukhayyam Program Coordinator).

This perspective was reinforced by another informant, who stated:

"Through well-organized scheduled activities, students learn to value time and understand the importance of complying with established rules." (Teacher Informant).

From the students' perspective, one informant explained:

"At first, it was quite difficult to follow the packed schedule, but gradually I became accustomed to arriving on time." (Grade IX Student Informant).

Meanwhile, another student stated:

"I try to participate in all activities on time because I do not want to hold up the group." (Grade VIII Student Informant).

The observation findings indicate that, at the beginning of the program, some students arrived late for scheduled activities. However, as the program progressed, students gradually adapted to the schedule and demonstrated greater compliance with the established timetable (Tyas et al., 2026). These findings suggest that *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of discipline through habituation in following rules, valuing time, and participating actively in all program activities.

Responsibility

Responsibility is developed by assigning students various individual and group tasks throughout *mukhayyam*. These tasks include maintaining environmental cleanliness, preparing activity equipment, and ensuring that all group members participate in scheduled activities. One informant explained:

"Students are assigned specific responsibilities so that they learn to fulfill the trust placed in them and cooperate with their group members." (Mukhayyam Program Coordinator).

This statement was supported by another informant, who stated:

"Through the division of tasks, students learn that every responsibility assigned to them must be fulfilled properly to ensure that group activities run smoothly." (Teacher Informant).

One student explained:

"I carry out my tasks according to the assigned responsibilities. If a friend has difficulty, we usually help each other." (Grade VIII Student Informant).

Meanwhile, another student stated:

"I have become more accustomed to completing the tasks assigned to me and trying to finish them on time." (Grade IX Student Informant).

The observation findings indicate that students actively participated in group tasks and helped one another when group members encountered difficulties. In addition, most students reported behavioral changes after participating in *mukhayyam*, such as helping their parents more frequently at home and becoming more responsible for completing school assignments (Prno et al., 2021). These findings indicate that *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of responsibility through direct experiences that train students to fulfill entrusted duties and cooperate with others.

***Istiqamah* (Consistency in Practicing Good Deeds)**

Istiqamah is a character value associated with the ability to maintain good habits consistently in everyday life. Based on the interviews, one informant explained:

"Changes in students' behavior can be observed while the activities are taking place, but maintaining consistency after the program ends remains a challenge for some students." (Teacher Informant).

This statement was reinforced by another informant, who stated:

"The value of istiqamah requires continuous guidance because it cannot be developed through a single activity alone." (Mukhayyam Program Coordinator).

From the students' perspective, one informant explained:

"I try to continue praying on time after the program ends, but sometimes I still forget." (Grade IX Student Informant).

Meanwhile, another student stated:

"I still practice the good habits taught during mukhayyam, although I am not always consistent." (Grade VIII Student Informant).

The observation findings indicate that most students have attempted to maintain the positive habits acquired during *mukhayyam*, such as performing congregational prayers, reading the Quran, and managing their time more effectively. However, the level of consistency varies among students. These findings suggest that *mukhayyam* can serve as an initial means of instilling *istiqamah*, but continued guidance from schools and families is necessary to ensure that the good habits developed during the program continue to grow and become part of students' personalities. Overall, these findings emphasize that *istiqamah* requires a long-term habituation process and continuous reinforcement (Jilhadi & Ritonga, 2023; Jumala & Abubakar, 2019).

The findings indicate that *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of students' religious character through habitual worship practices, spiritual experiences, and the internalization of Islamic values throughout the program. Activities such as congregational prayers, Quran recitation, *muroja'ah*, *dhikr*, and *qiyam al-layl* provide students with direct opportunities to practice Islamic teachings in their everyday lives. These findings are consistent with the view that Islamic education is a process of personality development based on Islamic teachings, aimed at fostering religious awareness that is reflected in everyday behavior (Hariyani & Rafik, 2021). Similarly, Islamic education is directed toward developing individuals who maintain good relationships with Allah, fellow human beings, and their environment (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). These findings also support the conclusion that Islamic education plays a strategic role in developing students' religious character through various religious habituation activities (Rohmah & Roqib, 2024). Thus, *mukhayyam* not only enhances students' religious understanding but also strengthens their spiritual awareness and religious practices.

In addition to religious character, *mukhayyam* contributes to the development of students' discipline and responsibility. Structured activity schedules, compliance with

established rules, and the assignment of individual and group tasks encourage students to value time, follow rules, and fulfill their entrusted responsibilities. These findings are consistent with the theory of character education, which emphasizes that good character develops through consistent moral habituation within the educational environment (Mulyani & Rostini, 2026). The findings also support research demonstrating that sustained habituation and role modeling can foster students' discipline. Furthermore, experiential educational activities and group work can improve students' sense of responsibility, cooperation, and leadership (Rumondor & Gobel, 2019). Therefore, *mukhayyam* provides students with opportunities to learn not only through knowledge acquisition but also through direct experiences of fulfilling obligations and social responsibilities.

The findings also indicate that *mukhayyam* contributes to strengthening students' social character, as reflected in *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, cooperation, mutual assistance, and concern for others. Group activities conducted throughout the program encourage students to interact, communicate, and complete various tasks collaboratively. These findings are consistent with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which explains that individual behavior develops through observation, social interaction, and direct experiences within the surrounding environment (Adrivat et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education, these interactions provide an important means of instilling the values of brotherhood, empathy, and social concern. The findings further support research indicating that collective religious activities can foster solidarity, strengthen Islamic identity, and increase students' social awareness (Syarifudin & Kholis, 2021). Thus, *mukhayyam* not only strengthens the vertical relationship between students and Allah but also reinforces horizontal relationships among students.

Despite its positive contributions to various aspects of Islamic character, this study found that the value of *istiqamah* requires further reinforcement. Some students acknowledged that they had not yet fully maintained the good habits acquired during the program after returning to their everyday environments. This finding indicates that character development cannot be achieved through one-off activities alone but requires a continuous process of guidance and reinforcement. This is consistent with the view that character becomes an integral part of an individual's personality when the values taught are continuously reinforced through consistent habituation (Tyas et al., 2026). The findings also support previous research indicating that the successful development of religious character and *istiqamah* is strongly influenced by the continuity of guidance provided by schools, families, and the social environment (Bali & Fadilah, 2019). Therefore, the effectiveness of *mukhayyam* in shaping Islamic character can be further enhanced through sustainable follow-up programs, teacher supervision, and parental involvement in reinforcing the values instilled throughout the activities.

CONCLUSION

The *mukhayyam* program serves as an Islamic education strategy for shaping the Islamic character of junior high school students. Through a range of integrated activities, including habitual worship practices, religious guidance, group work, and social activities, the program helps instill Islamic values in a more tangible and contextually relevant manner. The Islamic character values developed through *mukhayyam* include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), and *istiqamah* (steadfastness in practicing good deeds). Character development occurs through habituation, role modeling, direct experiences, and social interactions involving students throughout the program.

The novelty of this study lies in its in-depth analysis of *mukhayyam* as a form of experiential learning for developing students' Islamic character. Unlike previous

studies that have primarily focused on Islamic Religious Education instruction or religious activities in general, this study demonstrates that *mukhayyam* serves as a medium for integrating spiritual development, social development, and character education into a systematic series of activities. The implications of this study suggest that *mukhayyam* can serve as a model for strengthening character education based on Islamic values within the school environment. In addition to enhancing students' religiosity, the program contributes to fostering discipline, responsibility, social awareness, and positive habits that support the development of Muslim individuals with *akhlakul karimah* (noble character). Therefore, continued efforts to strengthen the *mukhayyam* program through the support of schools, teachers, and families are necessary to ensure that the character values instilled through the program can develop optimally and become an integral part of students' personalities in their everyday lives.

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Author contribution

Khoirunnisa: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Litakuna Karima:** editing, analysis, **Syifa Salsabila Saneva:** conceptualization, visualization, **Helena:** methodology.

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Ethical clearance

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