

Integrating Religious Values into School Management through Assembly and Joint Prayer

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Abstract

The increasing prevalence of disciplinary problems, ethical degradation, and the weakening of students' spiritual awareness has encouraged schools to adopt value-based management approaches that integrate religious values into everyday educational practices. This study aims to analyze the integration of religious values in school management through morning assembly and collective prayer as daily habituation practices at SMP–SMA Baitul Qur'an Subang. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving school leaders, teachers, and students as participants. Data were collected through classroom and school observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that morning assembly and collective prayer function not merely as routine ceremonial activities but as strategic instruments of school management that cultivate discipline, learning readiness, spiritual awareness, responsibility, and togetherness through continuous habituation. School leadership plays a central role in institutionalizing these practices through policy development, exemplary behavior, and the cultivation of a religious school culture. These findings imply that integrating religious habituation into school management strengthens character education while simultaneously serving as a contextual model of da'wah bil-hal, offering a practical framework for value-based educational management in contemporary schools.

Keywords

Da'wah bil-hal; morning assembly and prayer; religious values; school culture; school management

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INTRODUCTION

In a global context, education is no longer understood solely as a process of knowledge transfer, but rather as an effort to develop well-rounded individuals that encompasses intellectual, social, and moral dimensions (Vieira & Ferreira, 2023). The Education at a Glance report published by the OECD shows that increasing disciplinary problems, ethical degradation, and a crisis of meaning among students are serious challenges for modern education systems. This phenomenon has prompted many countries to review school management practices so that they are not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also towards the internalization of moral and spiritual values in everyday school life. In line with these demands, school management has undergone a paradigm shift from an administrative approach to a cultural and value-based approach. Asserts that the quality of education cannot be separated from the organizational culture and values that exist in schools. Schools that successfully build a shared culture through routine and symbolic practices tend to have a more conducive and sustainable learning climate. In this context, school rituals such as morning assemblies are beginning to be understood as part of a cultural management strategy that serves to build the identity and social cohesion of the school community.

In Indonesia, the issue of moral degradation and weak discipline among students is also a serious concern. Various national education policies emphasize the importance of strengthening character and religious values in educational units (Husaeni, 2023). However, in practice, these efforts often stop at incidental programs or ceremonial activities. Effective school management should be able to integrate religious values into the daily practices of the school, not just place them as an addition to the curriculum. From the perspective of Islamic preaching and education, schools are strategic spaces for the systematic and continuous internalization of Islamic values. Islamic education aims not only to educate the mind but also to shape the character and spiritual awareness of students. Therefore, school management practices that incorporate religious values can be understood as part of *da'wah bil-hal*, namely da'wah through concrete actions and habits that touch the daily lives of students.

This phenomenon is evident at Baitul Qur'an Subang Junior High School and High School, which possesses a distinct institutional characteristic in its implementation of daily rituals (Sabaruddin & Mastur, 2023). Unlike many Islamic schools where religious activities are often segregated by grade level or treated as elective extracurriculars, the morning assembly and communal prayer at this institution are implemented as a unified, cross-level management system involving all students from both junior and senior high school levels simultaneously. The uniqueness of this site lies in its integrated management approach, where the assembly serves as a primary synchronization mechanism for a diverse student body across different developmental stages, creating a cohesive school culture under a single managerial umbrella. Based on initial observations in the field, this activity is strictly positioned as a core component of the school's formal regulations rather than a mere ceremonial opening. The assembly and communal prayer not only serve as spiritual activities but also as a

deliberate instrument for instilling discipline, order, and readiness to learn collectively.

Psychologically, the habit of assembly and communal prayer has a calming effect, prepares students mentally, and strengthens their motivation to learn. Socially, this activity builds a sense of togetherness and collective identity as a school community based on religious values. From a moral perspective, this practice instills the values of trust, responsibility, and obedience to rules as part of worship. Consistent religious habits in an educational environment play an important role in shaping the character and moral awareness of students. A number of previous studies have examined religious habits in schools, generally in the context of character education or the formation of students' morals. However, most of these studies position religious activities as pedagogical activities, not as school management practices (Rahtikawatie et al., 2021). In addition, research on school culture mostly discusses macro policies and leadership, while daily routines such as assemblies and communal prayers are rarely analyzed as value-based management strategies. Thus, there is a research gap in terms of both the managerial approach and the context of Islamic schools across levels.

Based on this description, this study is important to understand in depth how the integration of religious values is realized in school management through the practice of assemblies and communal prayers at Baitul Qur'an Subang Junior High School and Senior High School. This study aims to analyze the meaning, process, and managerial implications of these practices in building a religious value-based school culture. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of school management and educational da'wah based on cultural practices (Amin et al., 2022). Practically, the findings of this study can be a reference for school administrators and education practitioners in designing effective, meaningful school management strategies rooted in Islamic values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how the routine practices of morning assemblies and communal prayers at Baitul Qur'an Subang Junior High School and Senior High School function as a school management mechanism and as a means of internalizing religious values within the school's organizational culture (Ramedlon et al., 2023). Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to examine phenomena contextually, holistically, and richly in meaning, especially when these phenomena are unique and tied to specific settings that cannot be separated from the social dynamics of the institution. The rationale for choosing a case study in qualitative research is reinforced by a methodological review that confirms that case studies are effective for exploring socio-educational issues in depth in a real context. Thus, the focus of the research is directed at the meaning, process, and managerial practices that accompany the routine of prayer assemblies as school policy or custom.

The research location was set at Baitul Qur'an Subang at the junior high and high school levels because it has a routine practice of assembly and prayer

together before learning, which is carried out across levels and has the potential to shape discipline, a religious atmosphere, and student readiness to learn. The research subjects were determined purposively based on their direct involvement and knowledge of the practices being studied: the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, teachers, prayer leaders, student council administrators, class presidents, and junior high and high school students. Informants were determined in stages until sufficient information (saturation) was achieved, taking into account variations in roles and experiences in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the case (Pahwa et al., 2023).

Data validity was maintained through source and technique triangulation, member checking, and careful simple audit trails of analytical decision summaries, interview guideline change notes, and observation logs so that interpretations did not stand on a single point of view. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the statements of the principal, teachers, assembly leaders, students, and policy documents, while technique triangulation was carried out by testing the suitability of the findings from observation, interviews, and documentation. Interpretation is also strengthened by confirming the summary of findings with key informants (member checking), especially on sensitive aspects such as student resistance, the effectiveness of discipline, or the meaning of religious values in routines (Taufik, 2022). In addition, ethical considerations were applied through participation consent, anonymization of identities when requested, and restrictions on the use of visual documentation only on material approved by the school and not detrimental to students.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Assembly and Prayer as Instruments of School Cultural Management

Based on the results of qualitative research (as presented in the results section), the morning assembly and prayer before classes indicate a function that goes beyond ceremonial activities. This practice operates as a cultural management instrument that regulates the daily rhythm of the school, prepares the psychological condition of students, and instills collective discipline norms. This pattern shows that school management is not always manifested through written policies or formal structures, but also through consistent and meaningful routine practices. These findings are in line with the view that school culture is formed from habits that are continuously reproduced and accepted as shared norms by the school community (Im et al., 2023).

Managerially, assemblies and communal prayers function as preventive social control mechanisms. These activities condition students to arrive on time, follow line-up rules, and focus their attention before learning begins (Swarniti, 2021). This pattern shows that strengthening discipline does not always require formal sanctions, but can be built through structured habituation. Culture-based management practices enable schools to build compliance and order through shared awareness, not merely administrative coercion.

From an organizational culture perspective, assemblies and communal prayers can be understood as institutional rituals that strengthen school identity. These rituals create symbols of togetherness and a sense of belonging, especially

when carried out across levels (junior high school–high school) in one educational environment. This cross-level pattern shows managerial efforts to unify values and norms in one school ecosystem. These findings are consistent with the results of research. Internalization of religious culture through habit formation can shape students' character and social cohesion (Snell & Morris, 2021).

From a school leadership perspective, the continuation of assemblies and communal prayers reflects the leadership's commitment to institutionalizing values through practical implementation. The principal and management team play a role in establishing these activities as part of school governance, rather than as incidental activities. This pattern of consistency indicates that leadership is not only manifested through strategic decision-making, but also through the management of symbols and habits that shape organizational culture. Quality leadership is reflected in the leader's ability to build a culture that supports continuous improvement (Mustajab et al., 2021).

Assemblies and communal prayers also demonstrate the integration of managerial functions and religious value-building functions. Prayers recited before studying become a means of internalizing the values of trust, *tawakal* (trust in God), and moral responsibility (Tambak et al., 2021). In this context, school management practices are not value-neutral, but rather laden with ethical content. Islamic education places religious habits as an important instrument in character building, because values that are internalized through practice tend to be more memorable than verbal delivery alone.

From the perspective of *da'wah* science, assemblies and communal prayers can be understood as a form of institutionalized *da'wah bil-hal*. *Da'wah* is not delivered through lectures, but through collective actions that are carried out repeatedly and in a structured manner. This pattern shows that schools play a role as an arena for institutional *da'wah* that instills Islamic values through daily management practices. Effective religious guidance in educational institutions occurs when religious values are integrated into the system and culture, not merely taught as cognitive material.

However, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of morning assemblies and communal prayers as instruments of cultural management is highly dependent on the level of participation and meaning attributed to them by the school community. If these practices are carried out in a formalistic manner without reflection on their values, their potential as instruments of cultural development may be weakened (Muyskens, 2022). Morning assemblies as a school policy require periodic evaluation so that they do not lose their pedagogical and characterological meaning. This emphasizes the importance of conscious and reflective management of cultural practices.

Theoretically, this discussion reinforces the view that school management needs to be understood as a cultural and value-based practice, not merely an administrative function. Assembly and communal prayer demonstrate how simple practices can function as instruments for managing discipline, shaping culture, and internalizing religious values simultaneously. Practically, these findings imply that schools, especially Islamic schools, need to manage daily rituals in a planned, consistent, and reflective manner in order to support the quality of education and

the mission of da'wah. The limitation of this discussion lies in the absence of quantitative data or direct interview quotes in the manuscript, so that the interpretation is conceptual and analytical in nature and needs to be enriched in subsequent publications.

Internalization of Religious Values through Daily Habits in the School Environment

Based on the findings of qualitative research (as described in the results section), daily habits in the school environment such as communal prayers, morning assemblies, and structured religious activities play a strategic role in the process of internalizing religious values among students. The pattern that emerges indicates that religious values are not transmitted through verbal teaching alone, but rather through repeated experiences that shape awareness and habits (Kumar et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the view that the internalization of values is a long-term process that requires consistent practice in the same social space. In the context of Islamic education, habits are understood as an effective medium for instilling values because they simultaneously touch on the affective and behavioral realms .

Theoretically, the internalization of religious values through daily habituation can be explained as a process of transforming values from external to internal within individuals. Values that were originally present as rules or institutional demands are slowly accepted as part of the personal consciousness of students. This pattern is seen when students begin to perform prayers, observe time discipline, and practice manners without strict supervision. Effective Islamic education not only shapes religious knowledge but also fosters moral awareness that is reflected in daily behavior (Rochim & Khayati, 2022). Thus, daily habits serve as a bridge between institutional norms and individual consciousness.

From a da'wah perspective, religious habits in schools can be understood as da'wah bil-hal, which is oriented towards character building. Dakwah does not take the form of lectures or rhetoric, but is manifested through structured and repetitive collective actions. This pattern shows that schools play a role as spaces for social dakwah that instill Islamic values through the practice of living together. Effective dakwah is dakwah that is able to touch real behavior and become a role model in social life, not just the delivery of normative messages. In this context, daily habits become a means of da'wah that works slowly but deeply (Riaz et al., 2023).

The findings also show that the internalization of religious values through daily habits contributes to the formation of discipline and self-control in students. Routine activities that begin with prayer and regularity in time form consistent behavior patterns. A consistently implemented religious school culture can shape students' religious character and social responsibility. Daily habits create a normative environment that encourages students to adjust their behavior to prevailing values.

From a psychological perspective, daily religious habits have an impact on students' mental readiness and emotional calm. Praying together before learning activities serves as an emotional regulation mechanism that helps students enter

the learning environment with greater focus and calm (Nair et al., 2023). This pattern shows that the internalization of religious values not only has an impact on moral aspects but also on the psychological well-being of students. This is in line with the Islamic educational view that places balance between spiritual and psychological aspects as the goal of holistic human development.

In a social context, daily religious habits build a sense of togetherness and collective identity in the school environment. Activities carried out together create collective spiritual experiences that strengthen solidarity among students and between students and teachers. This pattern shows that the internalization of religious values is not individualistic, but rather social-communal. Religious education in educational institutions serves to build social piety, not just personal piety (Miao & Wu, 2021). Thus, daily habits play a role in strengthening the social dimension of da'wah in the school environment.

However, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of the internalization of religious values through daily habits is highly dependent on the quality of implementation and the meaning given to them by school actors. Habits that are carried out mechanically without reflection have the potential to lose their substantive meaning. The practice of morning assemblies as a school policy requires continuous evaluation to remain relevant to the goal of character building. This confirms that religious habits must be managed consciously, reflectively, and contextually in order to function optimally as a means of internalizing values (Hasanah et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this discussion confirms that the internalization of religious values through daily habits is a process of cultural da'wah that is integrated with the education system. Habits not only function as a pedagogical method but also as a da'wah strategy that instills Islamic values in the daily lives of students. Practically, these findings imply that schools, especially Islamic schools, need to plan and evaluate daily habits in order to shape sustainable religious character.

The Role of School Leadership in Institutionalizing Morning Assembly and Prayer Practices

Based on the results of qualitative research (as described in the results section), school leadership plays a central role in institutionalizing the practice of morning assemblies and prayers as part of school governance. The findings show that the continuity of these activities is inseparable from the policies and commitment of school leaders in making them an official routine that binds the entire school community. This pattern confirms that cultural practices do not arise spontaneously, but rather through a process of institutionalization guided by leadership. In educational management studies, leadership is understood as a driving factor that determines the direction, values, and culture of a school organization.

Structurally, school leadership plays a role in establishing assemblies and prayers as part of the school's internal regulations, whether through rules and regulations, daily schedules, or the division of roles among implementers (Fry, 2023). Research data shows that clarity in the implementation structure—who leads the assembly, who guides the prayer, and how the monitoring mechanism

works—helps maintain consistency in practice. Within the framework of School-Based Management, functions as a manager who coordinates resources and activities in line with the school's vision and values.

In addition to structural aspects, school leadership is also evident in the exemplary behavior of leaders. The presence of the principal or vice principal in assemblies and joint prayers strengthens the legitimacy of these practices in the eyes of teachers and students. This exemplary behavior conveys the symbolic message that these activities have important value in school life. From an educational leadership perspective, exemplary behavior is seen as an effective instrument for building a sustainable organizational culture. Thus, leadership functions not only through instruction but also through concrete examples.

From the perspective of school culture, the role of leadership is evident in the ability of leaders to integrate assemblies and prayers into the institutional identity of the school. This practice is not positioned as an additional activity, but as part of the school's daily life. This pattern shows that school leadership acts as a culture builder that shapes the shared meaning of the practices carried out. Consistent leadership in building a religious culture can strengthen the character and social cohesion of students.

From a da'wah perspective, school leadership functions as the main actor of da'wah bil-hal in the educational environment. By institutionalizing assemblies and communal prayers, school leaders convey the message of da'wah through actions and systems, rather than through lectures. This pattern shows that educational leadership can be a medium for institutional da'wah that instills Islamic values in a sustainable manner. The success of religious guidance in educational institutions is greatly influenced by the commitment of leaders to integrate religious values into the school system and culture.

The findings also show that school leadership plays a role in building teacher and student participation in assemblies and prayers. Leaders who involve teachers in the planning and evaluation of activities tend to create a sense of shared ownership of these practices. This pattern indicates that the institutionalization of cultural practices requires participatory, rather than authoritarian, leadership. Effective educational leadership encourages the involvement of school actors as part of a quality improvement strategy.

However, research data also indicates challenges in the role of school leadership, particularly in maintaining the consistency and meaning of morning assemblies and prayers. Leadership changes, administrative burdens, or policy changes have the potential to weaken the intensity of these activities. The practice of morning assemblies as a school policy requires strengthened leadership and continuous evaluation so that it does not become a formalistic routine (Herd et al., 2023). This shows that the role of leadership is dynamic and requires ongoing commitment.

Theoretically, this discussion confirms that school leadership is a key factor in institutionalizing cultural and religious practices as part of school management. Assembly and prayer together are effective as instruments for fostering values when supported by visionary, consistent, and participatory leadership. Practically, these findings imply that strengthening the managerial and moral leadership

capacity of schools is an important prerequisite for the success of cultural da'wah practices in the educational environment. The limitation of this discussion lies in the absence of comparative data between schools, so that generalization of the findings needs to be done carefully and can be developed through further research.

Assembly and Prayer Together as a Practice of Dakwah Bil-Hal at School

Based on qualitative research findings, singing hymns and praying together before learning activities can be understood as a form of dakwah bil-hal practice that is integrated into school life. Dakwah bil-hal refers to the transmission of Islamic values through concrete actions and habits, not merely through verbal lectures. This pattern is evident when religious values are instilled through routine activities that involve the entire school community collectively. This practice shows that schools function as spaces for social dakwah that shape students' religious behavior gradually and continuously.

Conceptually, dakwah bil-hal emphasizes the importance of role models and direct experience in shaping religious awareness. In the school context, assemblies and communal prayers provide a shared spiritual experience for students, teachers, and school leaders. This pattern shows that the message of dakwah is not conveyed instructively, but is manifested in observable and imitable actions. (Tasmara, 1987) explains that effective dakwah is dakwah that touches on real behavior and is internalized in daily life, thereby forming a strong moral consciousness.

Research findings show that the practice of assemblies and communal prayers contributes to the formation of religious habits among students, such as time discipline, sincerity in prayer, and a respectful attitude before studying. This pattern shows that dakwah bil-hal works through a mechanism of habituation, in which Islamic values become part of students' daily routines. In Islamic education, habituation is seen as an effective method because values that are consistently repeated tend to shape character. Thus, assemblies and communal prayers serve as a medium for preventive and nurturing da'wah.

From a social perspective, dakwah bil-hal through assemblies and communal prayers builds collective piety in the school environment. Activities carried out together create spiritual and social bonds between students, while strengthening the school's identity as a religious community. This pattern shows that da'wah not only targets individuals but also shapes a social culture with Islamic values. Religious education in formal institutions has a strategic role in fostering social piety, which is reflected in interpersonal relationships and compliance with shared norms (Rahmi et al., 2023).

Assemblies and communal prayers as practices of dakwah bil-hal also demonstrate the close relationship between dakwah and school management. Dakwah does not stand apart from the institutional system but is integrated into the governance and organizational culture of the school. This pattern shows that dakwah can be institutionalized through planned managerial policies and

routines. In this context, schools act as da'wah institutions that convey Islamic messages through daily educational systems and practices.

From a psychological perspective, the practice of da'wah bil-hal through assemblies and communal prayers has an impact on students' mental preparedness and emotional calm. Prayer before studying serves as a means of spiritual strengthening that helps students manage their emotions and improve their focus on learning. This pattern shows that dakwah bil-hal not only has an impact on the spiritual dimension, but also on psychological well-being. Conceptually, Islamic education places spiritual and psychological balance as part of the goal of developing the whole person.

However, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of assemblies and communal prayer as practices of dakwah bil-hal greatly depends on the consistency of implementation and the exemplary behavior of school actors. If these activities are carried out mechanically without a deep understanding of their value, their function as dakwah can be weakened. This confirms that dakwah bil-hal requires harmony between actions and intentions, as well as continuous reflection on the meaning of the practices carried out. Without this awareness, rituals have the potential to lose their transformative power.

Theoretically, this discussion confirms that assemblies and communal prayers are relevant and contextual forms of dakwah bil-hal in formal educational environments. This practice shows that da'wah can be integrated into the school system through structured and meaningful daily habits. Practically, these findings imply that schools, especially Islamic schools, need to view routine activities as a strategic medium for dakwah, not merely ceremonial activities. The limitation of this discussion lies in the absence of direct quotations from the subjective experiences of students, so that the analysis is interpretive and requires further exploration through follow-up research.

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of religious values through morning assembly and collective prayer plays a significant role in shaping school culture and management practices. Rather than functioning merely as ceremonial activities, these routines operate as cultural management instruments that regulate discipline, learning readiness, and collective behavior within the school environment (Chun, 2023). This finding aligns with the view that school management extends beyond administrative functions to include the cultivation of shared values and norms through daily practices. In this sense, school rituals become a strategic medium for embedding values into organizational life.

From the perspective of value internalization, the study demonstrates that daily religious habituation enables students to gradually transform institutional norms into personal awareness. Repeated exposure to prayer and orderly assemblies fosters responsibility, self-discipline, and moral sensitivity among students. However, the data also reveals nuances regarding student resistance, particularly in the form of "formalistic compliance" where some students participate physically but lack spiritual engagement. This resistance often manifests as tardiness or mechanical repetition of prayers without deep reflection. Addressing this requires management to move beyond surveillance and toward creating a more participatory atmosphere that emphasizes the "why"

behind the ritual, ensuring that habituation strengthens the affective and behavioral dimensions of religiosity rather than becoming a source of student fatigue (Rohmatulloh et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the implementation faces technical and managerial challenges that can hinder its effectiveness. Maintaining consistency across the junior and senior high school levels requires complex scheduling and a high degree of coordination among staff. Technical issues, such as the management of large student populations in limited spaces and the potential for "ritual burnout" due to administrative burdens on teachers, pose risks to the sustainability of the program. Leadership emerged as a decisive factor in overcoming these hurdles. School leaders play a critical role in formalizing these practices through clear policies and, most importantly, through exemplary participation. Consistent leadership presence reinforces the legitimacy of these routines and encourages collective commitment, preventing the practices from becoming fragmented or purely symbolic.

From a *da'wah* perspective, the findings highlight that morning assembly and collective prayer represent a form of *da'wah bil-hal*, where Islamic values are communicated through action and institutional practice rather than verbal preaching. As argued by Tasmara (1987), *da'wah* becomes effective when embodied in real-life conduct, allowing values to be experienced rather than merely heard. In the school context, this enables students to experience religious values as part of everyday life, reinforcing both individual piety and social responsibility.

Finally, this study reveals that while daily religious practices offer strong potential for cultural and moral formation, their effectiveness depends on reflective implementation. Mechanical repetition without meaningful engagement or continuous evaluation may reduce the transformative impact. Therefore, schools must periodically conduct "member checking" and internal audits to gauge student sentiment and operational bottlenecks. It is recommended that schools ensure their religious routines are managed in a planned and sustainable manner to preserve their purpose as instruments of value-based management and cultural *da'wah*.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that morning assembly and communal prayer serve as effective cultural management instruments for integrating religious values through structured daily habituation. These practices foster discipline, learning readiness, and spiritual awareness among students by transforming institutional norms into collective experiences rather than relying solely on instructive approaches. The institutionalization of these routines is heavily dependent on the strategic role of school leadership through clear policy formulation, consistent role modeling, and active community involvement. Theoretically, these practices represent a form of *da'wah bil-hal* integrated into the school management system, where Islamic values are communicated through concrete institutional actions and social habits. Practically, Islamic educational institutions must manage these religious habits in a planned and reflective manner to ensure they

maintain a transformative impact on character building and do not diminish into purely mechanical or formalistic routines.

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