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Habituation of *Ikrar* as a Hidden Curriculum in Shaping Student Learning Etiquette

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to analyse the habituation of ikrar before class at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang, the process of internalising study etiquette through this practice within the school culture, and its contribution to the development of students' study etiquette within the framework of the hidden curriculum. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. Data were collected through non-participant observation over 10 days, semi-structured interviews with the principal, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, and student representatives, as well as school documentation, and were subsequently analysed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model. The results indicate that the ikrar is recited every morning in three stages: lining up, reciting the ikrar led by students in rotation, and shaking hands with teachers. This activity is not listed in formal curriculum documents but is carried out consistently and fulfills the three dimensions of the hidden curriculum according to Jackson, Snyder, and Apple. However, "hidden curriculum" here means not formally written down, not that it is unintentional, because the school consciously designs and maintains it. The internalization of values takes place through four interrelated mechanisms: daily repetition, teacher modeling, the experience of serving as the ikrar leader, and the reinforcement of the spiritual dimension. Through this mechanism, the ikrar contributes to the development of discipline, responsibility, respect for teachers, as well as intention and sincerity in learning—as outlined in Az-Zarnuji's principles of proper conduct in learning. This study concludes that a school-culture-based hidden curriculum can play a role in strengthening Islamic education if it is planned, implemented consistently, and accompanied by guidance so that students move from outward compliance toward a conscious commitment to good conduct.*

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pelaksanaan pembiasaan membaca *ikrar* sebelum pembelajaran di SMA Islam Al-Azhar 16 Semarang, proses internalisasi adab belajar melalui pembiasaan dalam budaya sekolah, serta kontribusinya terhadap pembentukan adab belajar siswa dalam kerangka kurikulum tersembunyi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi non-partisipan selama 10 hari, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan perwakilan siswa, serta dokumentasi sekolah, kemudian dianalisis dengan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil

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penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *ikrar* dilaksanakan setiap pagi dalam tiga tahap, yaitu berbaris, membaca *ikrar* yang dipimpin siswa secara bergilir, dan berjabat tangan dengan guru. Kegiatan ini tidak tercantum dalam dokumen kurikulum formal, tetapi dilakukan secara konsisten dan memenuhi tiga dimensi kurikulum tersembunyi menurut Jackson, Snyder, dan Apple. Namun, "*hidden curriculum*" di sini bermakna tidak tertulis secara formal, bukan tidak disengaja, karena sekolah merancang dan mempertahankannya secara sadar. Internalisasi nilai berlangsung melalui empat mekanisme yang saling berkaitan, yaitu pengulangan harian, keteladanan guru, pengalaman peran sebagai pemimpin *ikrar*, dan penguatan dimensi spiritual. Melalui mekanisme tersebut, *ikrar* berkontribusi pada pembentukan disiplin, tanggung jawab, penghormatan kepada guru, serta niat dan ketulusan dalam belajar sebagaimana adab belajar menurut Az-Zarnuji. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kurikulum tersembunyi berbasis budaya sekolah dapat berperan dalam penguatan pendidikan Islam apabila direncanakan, dijalankan secara konsisten, dan disertai pendampingan agar siswa bergerak dari kepatuhan lahiriah menuju kesadaran untuk beradab.

Keywords: *Ikrar Habituation, Hidden Curriculum, Learning Etiquette.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The school environment is one of the educational facilities that aims to develop the potential and knowledge of students, as well as to form etiquette and noble morals in order to produce individuals who are intelligent and have character (Adri et al., 2020). However, it turns out that in practice, the learning process in the school environment faces many problems. Not only is there the problem of academic achievement, but also the formation of etiquette in learning. The development of the education system that increasingly emphasizes learning outcomes has not been fully followed by the strengthening of attitudes, ethics, discipline, and respect for the learning process and teachers (Susilo et al., 2022). This condition is an important problem for educational institutions, especially Islamic education, because the success of education is not only determined by the ability of students to master knowledge, but also by their ability to apply adab in the process of seeking knowledge (Abrori & Ikhwan, 2024). Low attention to learning etiquette can affect the quality of the learning process and the formation of students' character, so habituation efforts are needed that are carried out consistently in school life.

From the perspective of Islamic Education itself, adab is an important part of the process of seeking knowledge. Az-Zarnuji explained that the success of a student in seeking knowledge is not only related to the ability to understand knowledge, but also to respect for knowledge, scholars, and teachers (Az-Zarnuji, 2015). This view shows that knowledge and adab are two aspects that are interrelated. Knowledge that is not accompanied by adab has the potential to lose its blessings and moral purpose. In line with this view, Al-Ghazali (2018) places learning etiquette as an integral part of the goals of Islamic education. Learning etiquette includes respect for teachers, discipline, sincerity, self-control, and awareness of responsibility in seeking knowledge. knowledge that is not accompanied by adab can distance humans from good values and

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eliminate the blessings of knowledge (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015). Thus, the formation of adab cannot be separated from the process of Islamic education (Ardiningrum, 2025).

The urgency of the formation of learning etiquette can also be seen from various problems found in educational practice. A number of studies show that there are still problems related to the discipline and learning ethics of students at various levels of education. The results of observations at SD Negeri Karanganyar 2 show that there is a lack of order among students in the learning process, which illustrates the problem of learning ethics in the classroom. At the elementary education level, research by Erlinda and Ihsan (2024) shows that the attitude of learning discipline has an influence on the learning outcomes of students' Moral Beliefs at MI Al-Hijrah Bontang. At the high school level, Rini et al. (2023) found that students' discipline attitudes, both inside and outside the classroom, are still not optimal. In addition, research by Susanti and Kumalasari (2025) shows that the application of adab education can help improve discipline, responsibility, and respect for teachers and the learning process. These findings show that the issue of learning etiquette is still an important part that needs attention in the implementation of education.

This problem shows that the formation of learning etiquette is not enough through the delivery of material in the formal curriculum. Values such as discipline, responsibility, respect for teachers, and awareness in learning require an internalization process that is carried out repeatedly and consistently. Students not only get grades through the material delivered explicitly by the teacher, but also through experiences, habits, interactions, examples, and culture that take place in the school environment. Therefore, schools need various habituation practices that can be educational experiences for students in shaping learning behaviour.

One concept that can explain this process is the hidden curriculum. Jackson (1990) explained that in addition to the formal curriculum, students also learn various values, norms, and behaviour patterns through daily experiences at school, including routines and social interactions. Snyder (1970) then explained that the educational environment contains implicit rules and demands that can affect student behaviour, including in terms of discipline and compliance with academic norms. Meanwhile, Apple (2004) views the hidden curriculum as a process of conveying values and ideology through educational practices and school culture. Based on this view, the hidden curriculum can be understood as an educational process that takes place implicitly through school habits, interactions, examples, and culture that can affect the formation of students' attitudes and behaviours.

A number of previous studies have shown that the hidden curriculum has a relationship with the formation of students' character and values. Sukarni's (2025) research shows that the hidden curriculum, through school activities and social activities, contributes to the formation of discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and mutual respect in elementary school students. Maudia et al. (2025) found that hidden curriculum plays a role in internalising moral values such as discipline, responsibility, empathy, and mutual respect through implicit norms and daily interactions in the university environment. Atmoko and Ekawati (2026) show that school routines, teacher examples, and unwritten social norms contribute to the formation of student discipline. Meanwhile, Pratiwi (2017) shows that the application of hidden curriculum in schools contributes to the formation of students' character.

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However, these studies still have some limitations. Previous research tends to discuss hidden curriculum in the form of school culture, social interaction, examples, and various school activities in general. This approach has not provided much insight into how one particular habituation practice can function as a hidden curriculum in the formation of students' learning etiquette. In addition, studies on habituation practices that are routinely carried out before learning and their relationship with the formation of learning etiquette in Islamic secondary school students are still limited. Existing research also does not explain much empirically about the values of etiquette contained in a particular habituation practice and how these values are internalised through consistent implementation. These limitations show that there is room for study to understand the hidden curriculum more specifically through habituation practices that actually take place in school life.

Based on observations at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School Semarang, there is a practice of reading *ikrar* before learning activities that are carried out regularly as part of school culture. This activity is carried out consistently and has become a form of habituation that is followed by all students before the learning process begins. Although this practice is not explicitly stated in the formal curriculum, it is still carried out as part of students' daily activities in the school environment. The practice of habituation that takes place continuously in school life has the potential to be a means of internalising values through social and cultural experiences in schools, known as the hidden curriculum.

This phenomenon shows that the formation of students' character and learning etiquette does not only take place through formal learning, but also through structured habituation in school culture. However, the practice of reading *ikrar* as part of the habituation still requires in-depth empirical study, especially related to its implementation, the values contained in it, and its role in shaping student learning etiquette. Therefore, this research is important to provide an empirical understanding of the role of certain habituation practices in school culture as a means of forming student learning etiquette.

Based on the existing research gaps, this study aims to analyse the implementation of the habit of reading *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School Semarang, examining the process of internalising learning etiquette through the habituation of reading *ikrar* in school culture. It also examines the contribution of habituation to the reading of *ikrar* in the formation of student learning etiquette. Practically, the results of this research are expected to be a reference for Islamic education units in developing contextual and sustainable adab development strategies. Academically, this research is expected to enrich the study of hidden curriculum from the perspective of practice-based Islamic education, especially related to certain habituation routines in schools as a means of forming student learning etiquette

II. METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. According to Yin (2018), a descriptive case study is a research design aimed at describing a phenomenon or the characteristics of a case in a detailed, accurate, and in-depth manner within a real-life context, without manipulating the subjects' behaviour. This design was selected because it allows the researcher to present a comprehensive and in-depth picture of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life setting by detailing the implementation of the *ikrar*-recitation practice and examining how this

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habit contributes to the formation of students' learning ethics, all while ensuring that the subjects' behaviour in the field remains unmanipulated.

To adhere to Yin's (2018) principle regarding the use of multiple sources of evidence, data collection involved non-participant observation, conducted repeatedly over 10 days, focusing on the execution of the *ikrar* and indicators of students' learning ethics. Primary data were gathered through non-participant observation of the *ikrar*-recitation process and students' learning-related ethical behaviour, as well as through semi-structured interviews with the school principal, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, and student representatives selected based on their involvement and experience with these activities. Secondary data were obtained from relevant supporting documents, including the text of the *ikrar*, activity schedules, photographs of the proceedings, school religious program documentation, and lesson plans or religious program curricula. Both types of data sources were utilized to gain a thorough understanding of the *ikrar*-recitation practice and its connection to the development of students' learning ethics.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively, following the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. During the data condensation phase, the researcher selects and categorizes findings from observations, interviews, and documentation based on the research focus: the implementation of the *ikrar* recitation, the ethical learning values embedded within it, the process of internalising these values, and the factors that either support or hinder its execution. Subsequently, the data is presented through descriptive accounts and thematic groupings to identify patterns and interconnections among the findings.

To ensure the validity of the collected data, the researcher assesses credibility through triangulation, specifically methodological triangulation and data source triangulation (Sugiyono, 2013), which combines various techniques and data sources to enhance the legitimacy of the research results. In this study, methodological triangulation is employed by examining and comparing the consistency of information across different methods, namely non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and internal school documents. Meanwhile, data source triangulation is applied by comparing and cross-verifying data regarding the same phenomenon from the perspectives of different subjects: the school principal, PAI teachers, and student representatives. Through this integrative approach, the researcher aims to obtain a comprehensive and objective overview of the mechanisms for implementing the *ikrar* before the start of lessons, the ethical learning values successfully instilled through this practice, and the actual challenges faced by the school in its implementation.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Habituation of Reading *Ikrar* as a Hidden Curriculum

The habituation of the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang is conducted routinely every morning in three consecutive stages: activities before the *ikrar*, the recitation of the *ikrar*, and activities after the *ikrar*. Based on observations of the first stage, the activities preceding the habituation of the *ikrar* begin after the bell rings at 7:10 a.m. The students line up in front of their respective classrooms under the guidance of their homeroom teachers. The lines are separated into male and female student lines. The second activity is the recitation of the *ikrar*. The *ikrar* includes the

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recitation of the *Syahadat*, a prayer before studying, and a prayer for both parents in Arabic and English. This activity is led by a student who is selected on a rotating basis. The third activity takes place after the recitation of the *ikrar*. This activity concludes with a handshake between students and teachers before entering the classroom. These three activities take place consistently every day. However, they are not explicitly listed in the school's formal curriculum documents, as emphasized by the vice principal for religious affairs (WRH), who stated:

> "These activities are carried out as a matter of custom, even though they are not written into our school's formal curriculum."

Based on the explanation above, there is a concept of the hidden curriculum embedded in the practice of habituation, the *ikrar*, as described by Jackson (1990), Snyder (1970), and Apple (2004). First, according to Jackson (1990), there are three concepts underlying the formation of the hidden curriculum, as explained in his book Life in the Classroom. According to Jackson (1990), students learn to live in crowds, accept praise, and submit to authority. The habituation of *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang is part of classroom life that shapes students beyond the written curriculum. The element of crowds is evident when students wait for the 7:10 a.m. bell, line up, take their positions, and wait for the *ikrar* leader to begin, which can be understood as practice in waiting for one's turn and adapting to the group. The element of authority is evident in the supervision by homeroom teachers and the separation of lines by gender, which fosters a pattern of compliance with teachers' instructions without being explicitly taught as part of the curriculum. The element of assessment is not apparent in the data because there is no formal evaluation of the *ikrar* implementation; thus, the *ikrar*'s influence operates more through routine and authority than through praise or grading.



Figure 1. *Students gathered to get ready to line up before the ikrar*

Snyder (1970) views the hidden curriculum as implicit expectations that differ from an institution's formal requirements and must be understood by students on their own in order to adapt. In the case of the *ikrar*, these implicit expectations take the form of a respectful attitude, orderliness, punctuality, and the etiquette of shaking hands with teachers. None of these are stipulated in written documents, but are collectively understood and practiced as part of the school culture. Students discern these

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expectations from recurring patterns and the behaviour of the school community, rather than from written rules. However, there is an important difference from Snyder's (1970) findings in higher education. In Snyder's (1970) research, hidden demands often diverged from the institution's formal goals. In contrast, in the *ikrar*, the implicit demands are actually aligned with the formal goals of the Islamic school, namely the cultivation of adab. Student interviews (Hnf and Irql) mentioning increased diligence and a sense of responsibility point to this alignment. However, the limited data cannot yet rule out the possibility that some students are merely conforming superficially.

Apple (2004) views the hidden curriculum as a shift in focus from what students learn to whose values are being conveyed. From this perspective, school routines help transmit certain values and ideologies as something natural. In the *ikrar*, this dimension is evident in its spiritual content—namely, the shahada, the prayer before class, and the prayer for parents. These elements are not positioned as academic subjects, but each morning they instill the school's religious identity. The separation of lines by gender and the authority of the homeroom teacher can also be interpreted as the normalisation of a specific order regarding space, roles, and obedience. However, Apple's perspective must be interpreted within its context. In Islamic schools, the values being transmitted are not hidden from administrators or parents because they are part of the school's mission; thus, "hidden" means they are not listed in the curriculum documents, not that they are unknown.

An analysis of the concepts proposed by Jackson (1990), Snyder (1970), and Apple (2004) shows that the practice of the *ikrar* fulfills three dimensions of the hidden curriculum. First, Jackson (1990) states that classroom life shapes students through routines, group dynamics, and authority structures outside the written curriculum. This dimension is fulfilled because the *ikrar* is recited every day without exception and requires students to line up, take their positions, and follow the homeroom teacher's instructions. At the same time, the element of praise is not evident in the data. Second, Snyder (1970) emphasizes the existence of implicit demands beyond formal requirements. This dimension is fulfilled because the attitudes of reverence, orderliness, and the etiquette of shaking hands with teachers are not stipulated in written documents, as the vice principal affirmed that the *ikrar* is not written into the formal curriculum but is understood and carried out collectively. Third, Apple (2004) views school practices as a means of transmitting values and ideology. This dimension is fulfilled because the creed and prayers recited every morning instill the school's religious values without being treated as academic subjects, while the line-up reflects the teacher's authority. The interaction between teachers and students during line formation and handshakes serves as the link between these three dimensions, consistent with research indicating that teachers' exemplary behaviour is the primary medium for the internalization of values through the hidden curriculum (Damayanti et al., 2025). Thus, the practice of the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang can be categorized as an intentional hidden curriculum: it is not listed in formal documents but is designed and maintained as part of the school's culture.

The findings of this study indicate that the habituation of the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang exhibits the characteristics of a hidden curriculum: it is not included in formal curriculum documents, takes place through daily routines, and is conveyed through teacher-student interactions. However, identifying these characteristics does not resolve a more fundamental conceptual issue. As Jackson (1990)

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explained, the hidden curriculum refers to experiences that students learn indirectly from classroom life, such as waiting their turn, obeying authority, and conforming to teachers' expectations without these being explicitly designed as learning objectives. In the case of the *ikrar*, the situation is different. In the case of the *ikrar*, the situation is different. The vice principal (WRH) stated:

> "The habit of *ikrar* is a practice carried out as part of the habits and routines of the entire Al-Azhar school, even though it is not written in its formal curriculum."

This means that this practice is hidden from the documents but not hidden from the intentions of the school administrators. This finding suggests that in the context of religious schools, "hidden" is more accurately understood as not formally documented, rather than unintentional or carried out unconsciously. Thus, this study expands on Jackson's (1990) understanding that there is an unwritten curriculum consciously designed as an instrument for character development.

Internalising Learning Etiquette through the Habit of Reading the *Ikrar* in School Culture

If the previous section shows that *ikrar* operate as a hidden curriculum, this section explains how the mechanism works to transform students' outward behaviour into internally lived values. There are at least four interrelated mechanisms, namely daily repetition, teacher example, direct experience through rotating roles, and strengthening the spiritual dimension as a bridge between students' cognitive and affective awareness. The first mechanism is daily repetition that leads to behavioural automation. The reading of the *ikrar* is carried out every morning without exception, so that actions such as marching on time, being orderly, and following the teacher's instructions are no longer carried out as continuous supervised obedience, but gradually become habits that students carry out without the need to be reminded repeatedly. This process is in line with the finding that repetitive and continuous habituation makes values not only cognitively understood, but also internalised in students' daily behaviour, especially in the formation of academic discipline and attitudes (Atmoko & Ekawati, 2026).

The second mechanism is the role model of teachers through social modeling. The presence of homeroom teachers who accompany the ranks of students every morning, as well as the teacher's willingness to accept students' handshakes after the *ikrar*, is not just a form of administrative supervision. This presence serves as a direct example that makes the value of respect and order something that is consistently exemplified by the teacher, not just verbally commanded. This aspect distinguishes the internalization process from mere surface compliance, as students are not only asked to obey the rules, but also witness the same pattern of behaviour carried out by authority figures in the school. This reinforces the view that hidden curriculum plays an important role in shaping students' social relationships as well as their attitudes towards educational authorities (Gunio, 2021), and is in line with the findings that routine formation practices such as marching contribute to fostering discipline, politeness, and respect for teachers (Suwondo & Waskito, 2024)

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Figure 2. *The ikrar was supervised by the teacher*

The third mechanism is direct experience through the rotating role of the *ikrar* leader. The assignment of students in turn to lead the reading of the *ikrar* puts them in a position of responsibility for the smooth running of the activity. In contrast to teaching the value of responsibility verbally or normatively, this mechanism makes students experience directly the consequences of their role, where the order of their peers depends on their readiness and sincerity to carry out the task. The learning process through this kind of role experience makes the value of responsibility something that is understood experientially, not just information that is received passively.

The fourth mechanism, and the one that most shows the shift from outward action to inner appreciation, is the spiritual dimension of the vow as a bridge between the cognitive and affective consciousness of the student. The interview data shows this shift directly. One of the students (HNF and IRQL) stated:

> "When I read the vow, especially when reading the creed, I feel more diligent and eager to learn."
>
> "When I read the prayer before studying and the prayer for both my parents, I feel more responsible and have to study seriously because this is also the mandate and expectation of my parents at home."

These two statements show that the act of reciting the prayer does not stop as a verbal ritual, but rather results in a change in the subjective level of motivation and sense of responsibility of the students. These findings are in line with research showing that spiritual routines in schools can contribute to students' motivation to learn, while reinforcing the view that true intentions and strong motivation are important cornerstones for learning success (Almahfuz et al., 2020; Ristianto et al., 2023)

These four mechanisms, which include daily repetition, exemplary role modeling, role experience, and spiritual reinforcement, work simultaneously, not alone. Daily repetition creates behavioural consistency, the teacher's example provides a social reference for the values performed, the role experience brings direct responsibility, and the spiritual dimension binds the entire process to a deeper meaning for the student. This combination explains how the habit of *ikrar*, which at first glance appears to be a mere administrative routine, is able to transform into a comprehensive internalization of learning ethics that includes the dimensions of discipline, responsibility, respect for the

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teacher, and intention and sincerity, as will be described in more detail in the next section.

Etiquette of Learning in the Perspective of Syech Az-Zarnuji

Etiquette occupies a central position in the process of seeking knowledge. Imam Burhanuddin Az-Zarnuji, in the book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* Thariq at-Ta'allum, emphasized that many students of knowledge have studied earnestly but have not benefited from their knowledge, namely, not being able to practice and spread it. This is because their way or etiquette of learning is wrong and the conditions are abandoned (Az-Zarnuji, 2015). Broadly speaking, in his book, Syech Az-Zarnuji wrote 8 chapters related to etiquette in learning, but here the author concludes with 4 outlines, namely: deep intention and seriousness in learning, respect for knowledge and teachers, and learning time in seeking knowledge (Az-Zarnuji, 2015). The first, *adab*, is the intention of sincerity in learning. In the perspective of the book written by Syech Az-Zarnuji, the ideal intention in learning is to seek the pleasure of Allah, practice knowledge, teach others, and as a form of gratitude for the gift of reason (Arsalan, 2023). In practice, this intention is closely related to the prayer read before studying. The habit of praying before studying can foster discipline and religious character in students (Novianty & El-Yunusi, 2025). Praying before studying also encourages the internalization of spiritual values, which has an impact on increasing students' respect, order, and seriousness in the learning process (Rosadah & Solihat, 2024). Thus, prayer before learning serves as a spiritual bridge that connects intention with learning activities. Through prayer, students realize that Allah is the source of all knowledge and ask for ease and blessings in their learning process.

The second is respect for knowledge and teachers. The book *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* explains that students' ethics towards teachers include several important things, such as respecting the teacher in words and deeds, not interrupting the teacher when he is speaking, being humble, and showing sincerity and seriousness in seeking knowledge (Husna & Fahmi, 2025). The application of ethics in the classroom has a concrete form that can be observed in the daily learning process. For example, students who greet the teacher politely when entering the classroom, ask permission before asking questions or leaving the room, listen carefully to the teacher's explanation, and do not play on mobile phones or talk to each other while the teacher is explaining. These things are a real reflection of appreciation and respect for educators (Nadhirah, 2025). The third is to make good use of time in studying. In his book, *Ta'limul Muta'allim,* Az-Zarnuji (2015) recommends that students of knowledge use their time to study earnestly. In the excerpt of clause 8, which reads:

> *"The best time to study is the beginning of the time of youth, the time of fasting and the time between maghrib and isya. However, it is better to use all the time available to study."*

According to Muis et al., (2025), the excerpt in the book, namely:

وينبغي أن يستغرق جميع أوقاته

Which means "it is better to use all the time that already exists", is not only understood as the main time recommendation to be used for studying, but also as the foundation for time management and learning discipline. In this case, Imam Az-Zarnuji also emphasized that students should not waste time and use it continuously to seek knowledge (Az-Zarnuji, 2015). This view is in line with the findings of Saihu (2020),

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who places seriousness, continuity, an orderly attitude, and the intelligence of utilizing learning time as part of the ethics of studying in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*. The views of Munawaroh, Wakila, and Ijudin (2021) explain that the *istiqamah* of learning described in this book is supported by effective and efficient time management and a combination of noble ideals with seriousness to minimize laziness. This is also the case. In this case, the time management in question is part of the time discipline that must be maintained in the *istiqamah* of learning.

Thus, it can be concluded that learning ethics is the main foundation in the process of seeking knowledge. Learning etiquette includes intention and seriousness in learning, respecting teachers, and using study time wisely. Righteous intentions for the sake of Allah are manifested in the habit of praying before studying, which fosters seriousness and awareness that knowledge comes from Him. Sincerity is reflected in students' responsibility for their learning process, accompanied by spiritual awareness through the habit of praying before studying. Respect for teachers is shown through polite behaviour, listening carefully to explanations, and active involvement of students in learning activities. Moreover, making good use of time is reflected in an orderly attitude, discipline, and *istiqamah* in learning. All components of learning ethics are interrelated and form a learning attitude that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also on the blessings of knowledge and the formation of students' character holistically. *Ikrar* as a hidden curriculum in shaping student learning etiquette.

The Role of Regularly Habitualising the *ikrar* in Shaping Students' Study Ethics

Based on the habit of saying *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 High School in Semarang, it shows its role as a hidden curriculum through a series of habits that are carried out before, during, and after saying the *ikrar*. Each session of these activities contains values that contribute to shaping student learning. These values include, first, discipline. Based on observations on Friday, August 20, 2025, at Al-Azhar 16 Semarang High School, the activity before the *ikrar* reading began when the school bell rang at 07.10. After the bell rang, the students lined up in front of their respective classrooms accompanied by their homeroom teachers. Female students stood on the right of the teacher, while male students stood on the left. The students in charge of leading the *ikrar* then came forward to organize the line. After the students were in their respective positions, the leader read the *ikrar* and was followed by his friends.

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Figure 3. *Recitation of the ikrar by students*

The series of activities, starting from punctuality before saying the vow and marching in front of the class according to the place, is a reflection of the discipline of time and place that has been applied in the school. An orderly attitude is also trained when the students line up according to the order and the place. Based on the theory in the book Az-Zarnuji, this is one of the important aspects of etiquette to be applied before the learning process continues (Az-Zarnuji, 2015). Thus, the activities before the reading of the *ikrar*, which include entering on time at 07.10 and marching in front of the classroom with a predetermined place, also accompanied by the homeroom teacher, are a form of hidden curriculum that contributes to the formation of learning etiquette, namely practicing discipline.

Second, Responsibilities. The value of responsibility contained in the reading of the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Semarang High School is reflected in the practice before the *ikrar* is read. In its implementation, the *ikrar* officer is chosen in turn from each class member so that each student has a schedule and responsibilities determined by the school. The *ikrar* leader is tasked with standing in front to lead the reading of the *ikrar* so that it runs smoothly, by reciting the *ikrar* one sentence after another, which other students then follow. This structured reading pattern not only aims to maintain order and discipline, but also to train students' mental readiness and awareness in carrying out the roles entrusted to them. The assignment of students as *ikrar* leaders takes turns to train personal and social responsibility, because the success of this activity is highly dependent on the sincerity of students in carrying out their duties. From the perspective of Islamic education, responsibility is an integral part of learning ethics. The habit of leading *ikrar* consciously and in an orderly manner is a means of forming learning ethics, because students are trained to prepare themselves, respect the learning process, and understand that every learning activity contains moral values that must be upheld. Thus, the habit of saying *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School Semarang can be understood as a hidden form of curriculum that plays an important role in shaping students' learning etiquette. The value of responsibility is not taught through formal instruction, but is internalised through consistent and repetitive practices in daily school life. These findings are in line with research that confirms that school culture and habits have a significant contribution to the internalization of character values, including

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responsibility, which are the main foundation in shaping student learning etiquette (Khoda, 2023).

Third, Respect teachers. Based on observations after making the *ikrar*, students shake hands with the accompanying teacher before entering their respective classrooms to participate in learning activities. During the learning process, students show attitudes that reflect learning etiquette, such as paying attention to the teacher's explanations, listening carefully, and not showing behaviour that deviates from the classroom rules and learning ethics. Relatively conducive classroom conditions indicate that students are more mentally prepared and willing to participate in learning. The value of respecting teachers is shown when, after saying the *ikrar*, students shake hands with the accompanying teacher before entering their respective classrooms to participate in learning activities. Furthermore, during the learning process, students exhibit attitudes that reflect learning etiquette, such as paying attention to the teacher's explanations, listening carefully, and not showing behaviour that deviates from the rules of the classroom and learning ethics. Relatively conducive classroom conditions indicate that students are better prepared mentally and attitude-wise to participate in learning. This phenomenon reflects a learning readiness that is not only cognitive but also affective, which is formed through habits of ethical attitudes and interactions between students and teachers in daily school activities.

This suggests that the routine after taking the *ikrar* is not merely administrative or technical, but rather serves as a hidden curriculum that works through students' daily experiences. The practice of shaking hands with teachers before entering the classroom implicitly instills the value of respect for teachers as a source of knowledge while building ethical relationships that support the formation of learning etiquette. These values are not explicitly written in the formal curriculum, but are internalised through habits that are consistently practiced in school culture. These findings are in line with research that confirms that hidden curricula play an important role in shaping student etiquette and respect through daily interactions between teachers and students (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Other research also shows that the development of students' good etiquette and character can be effectively formed through habitual practices that are integrated into school culture, even though they are not formally listed in the curriculum document (Pramitasari et al., 2024).

Fourth, Intention and Sincerity in Learning. The reading of the *ikrar* shows the value of intention and sincerity in learning, as seen in the reading of the creed at the beginning of the *ikrar*, which serves to strengthen the spiritual orientation of students before entering the learning process. Based on the interview (HNF):

> "When I read the *ikrar*, especially when reading the creed, I feel more diligent and eager to learn."

This is in line with previous research which shows that spiritual/religious routines at school, such as congregational prayers, prayers, and strengthening religious values, can contribute to students' motivation to learn (Ristianto et al., 2023). Next is the reading of prayers before studying and prayers for both parents. Based on the interview, the student (IRQL) said:

"When I read the prayer before studying and the prayer for my parents, I feel more responsible and have to study seriously because this is also the mandate and expectation of my parents at home."

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This shows that the practice of saying prayers in *ikrar* is an implicit means for schools to form a sense of responsibility and seriousness in learning as part of learning ethics. This is reinforced by research that states that the right intentions and strong motivation are important foundations for learning success (Almahfuz et al., 2020). Thus, intentions are an important part of learning ethics in determining students' success in pursuing knowledge.

Thus, the practice of reciting *ikrar* at Al-Azhar High School serves as a hidden curriculum in shaping learning ethics, namely intention, responsibility, and sincerity in learning. Reciting the *ikrar* strengthens students' spiritual orientation, so that they start learning activities with more sincere and focused intentions. Saying prayers before learning fosters mental readiness and increases self-awareness that the process of seeking knowledge is a form of worship that requires seriousness and discipline. Meanwhile, saying prayers for parents fosters moral awareness that academic success is not only for oneself, but also a form of devotion to parents. This emotional element fosters a stronger sense of responsibility in students, encouraging them to study seriously and carry out their duties seriously.

The Implications of a School-Culture-Based Hidden Curriculum for Strengthening Islamic Education

As discussed in the previous section, the findings of this study may have several implications for research on the hidden curriculum in Islamic educational institutions. The first implication relates to the concept of "hidden" in the hidden curriculum. Until now, the hidden curriculum has generally been understood as educational influences that are not officially documented and are sometimes unrecognized by school officials. However, the practice of the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang reveals a different reality. Although not included in the formal curriculum, the habituation of *ikrar* is still consciously carried out and planned by school officials. Qulyubi et al. (2026) noted in their research that the hidden curriculum can be intentionally planned, implemented, and monitored; it does not merely emerge spontaneously. Thus, the term "hidden" in this study is more accurately interpreted as activities not documented in formal curriculum materials, rather than activities unknown or unrecognized by the school. Unlike studies that examine multiple programs simultaneously, such as the Dhuha prayer, Qur'an study sessions, and literacy activities (Qulyubi et al., 2026), this study demonstrates that even a single, simple activity performed daily can embody the structural, social, and spiritual elements of the hidden curriculum.

The second implication relates to the process of internalization. Research by Martani et al. (2026) shows that habituation, teacher modeling, and collective social legitimacy shape religious habitus, with a gradual shift from external compliance toward internal awareness. Qulyubi et al. (2026) reported a similar pattern: students initially participated in activities because they were required to do so by the school, but after repeated participation, they carried them out as a habit. The findings of this study reinforce this pattern and add two points. First, taking turns as the leader of the *ikrar* gives students direct experience in taking responsibility for the conduct of the activity. Second, praying for both parents links learning to the trust and responsibility entrusted to a child, so that students' motivation extends beyond school discipline to include moral and spiritual significance. However, this internalization does not always occur fully among students. Discipline and compliance with group norms must be accompanied by self-awareness

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so that an individual is able to accept rules voluntarily (Durkheim, 1961). Therefore, the process of habit formation through the hidden curriculum must be understood as a process that requires time and guidance, not as an activity that can automatically shape the manners of all students, particularly within Islamic educational institutions.

Based on these two findings, it can be concluded that the school-culture-based hidden curriculum plays an important role in strengthening Islamic education, particularly in the process of instilling and shaping students' manners. Activities not listed in the formal curriculum can still be part of the educational process if they are consistently planned and implemented by the school. Through the practice of reciting *ikrar*, teachers setting a good example, student involvement, and the instillation of moral and spiritual values, Islamic education is not only conveyed through classroom learning but is also embodied in daily life. Thus, the hidden curriculum can serve as a supportive tool for Islamic education in gradually shaping students' conduct—from simply following school customs to developing the awareness to apply these values of their own volition. However, this process still requires guidance and consistency from the entire school community so that the instilled values do not remain mere routines but can grow to become an integral part of students' behaviour and character.

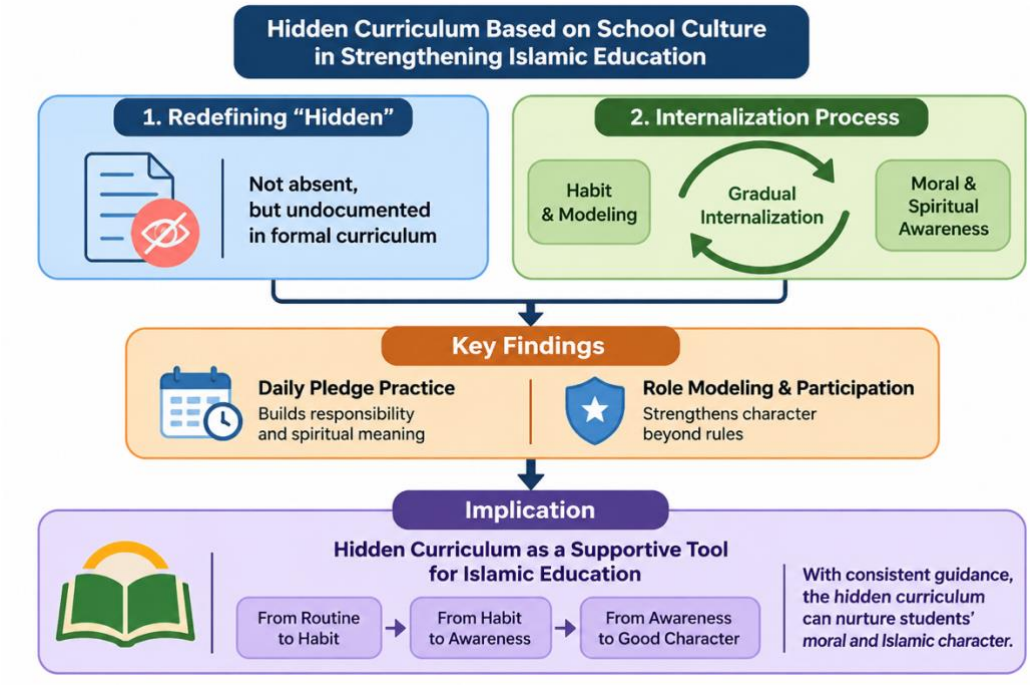

Figure 4. *The Ikrar as a Hidden Curriculum for Strengthening Islamic Education*

IV. CONCLUSION

This study found that the practice of reciting the *ikrar* at Al-Azhar 16 Islamic High School in Semarang constitutes a form of hidden curriculum that shapes students' learning etiquette—namely, discipline, responsibility, respect for teachers, and sincerity and dedication to learning—through four interrelated mechanisms: daily repetition, teachers' exemplary behaviour, rotating roles as *ikrar* leaders, and the reinforcement of spiritual dimensions. An unexpected finding was that this practice is not truly "hidden" from the school administration. The *ikrar* is not included in formal curriculum

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documents, but it is consciously designed and maintained as part of the school culture; thus, the term "hidden" in the context of Islamic schools is more accurately understood as not formally documented, rather than unintentional. This study contributes theoretically by expanding on the concept of the hidden curriculum proposed by Jackson, Snyder, and Apple through evidence that a single simple, routine activity can simultaneously contain structural, social, and spiritual elements. Practically, these findings can serve as a reference for Islamic educational institutions in developing specific habits as an effort to shape students' learning etiquette. A limitation of this study is that it was conducted at only one location; therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Future research could examine the various practices found in different Islamic educational institutions to measure the extent to which students have internalised proper study etiquette in a broader and more in-depth manner.

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