



The Transformation of Student Character Through Islamic-Based Scouting Activities

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine how character values are transformed through Scouting activities in the context of experiential Islamic education. A qualitative case study approach was employed to explore the process, forms, and impact of character development. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving school leaders, Scout mentors, teachers, and students. Data analysis followed the stages of reduction, presentation, and interactive conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Scouting activities effectively foster core character values, including discipline, responsibility, independence, cooperation, leadership, and religiosity. The transformation process occurs in three stages: internalization, habituation, and actualization, facilitated by mentors as role models and a supportive religious environment. Experiential activities allow students to internalize values directly, producing tangible and sustainable behavioral changes. The study concludes that Scouting significantly contributes to the holistic development of students' character socially and spiritually. These results support the theoretical framework of experiential learning-based character education and provide practical guidance for educational administrators to utilize extracurricular programs as a strategic tool for strengthening character education.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education has increasingly become a global and national concern, as societies face moral and ethical challenges amid rapid technological, cultural, and social changes. The point is that education should not only produce academically competent students but also individuals with strong ethical, social, and spiritual values (Hadi & Masuwd, 2025; Mustaghfiroh & Mubaroq, 2025). The reason is that students without solid character foundations often struggle to adapt to societal expectations, leading to increased moral degradation, deviant

behaviors, and weakened social responsibility. Evidence from MDPI (2023) indicates that educational quality is measured not only by cognitive achievements but also by students' holistic development, including attitudes and behaviors (Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024; Sholehah & Ichsan, 2025). In the Indonesian context, the government emphasizes character education as a policy priority, especially in religious schools like madrasas, which have dual mandates: knowledge mastery and character development. Consequently, enhancing character education in schools through practical, experiential methods is crucial. In conclusion, understanding effective strategies to foster student character development is not only academically relevant but also socially imperative for building a resilient, ethical, and responsible generation.

Despite policy priorities, the integration of character education into daily school practices remains inadequate. Schools often rely on traditional teaching methods that focus primarily on cognitive outcomes, neglecting affective and psychomotor dimensions essential for character formation. Students frequently encounter moral challenges, such as low discipline, weak social responsibility, and tendencies toward deviant behavior, reflecting insufficient internalization of core values (Abas & Kholidah, 2025; Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025). This problem is further exacerbated in religious schools, where despite the presence of Islamic teachings, values often remain theoretical rather than actively practiced in daily routines. Sabran et al., (2023) highlighted that less innovative learning strategies contribute to student disengagement and learning burnout, undermining character development objectives. Therefore, there is a societal need for educational approaches that are participatory, experiential, and contextual, capable of integrating knowledge acquisition with moral, spiritual, and social growth. Addressing this gap can help mitigate moral degradation, fostering students who are not only knowledgeable but also ethically and socially responsible.

In practice, many madrasas, including secondary Islamic schools, face challenges in effectively translating character education into tangible student behavior. For instance, in certain regions, including East Kalimantan, character education remains largely curricular, lacking integration with extracurricular or real-life contexts (Hamdanah et al., 2025; Susanti et al., 2025). Observations indicate that students often demonstrate knowledge of ethical and religious principles without consistently exhibiting corresponding behaviors, such as

responsibility, cooperation, and discipline, in daily school activities. Extracurricular programs, particularly Scouting, have emerged as a potential solution due to their emphasis on experiential learning, leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving. Rasem (2023) argued that Scouting provides practical opportunities for students to internalize values such as independence, discipline, and responsibility. Similarly, Sudarwati (2023) suggested that engaging students in Scouting positively shapes adaptive and ethical behaviors. These phenomena indicate the critical importance of studying how structured experiential programs, like Scouting, can concretely influence the internalization and transformation of character values in real educational contexts.

Previous research has explored character education from various perspectives, yet several gaps remain. Viratama (2023) and Rasem (2023) examined character development broadly, often neglecting the in-depth processes through which values are internalized during extracurricular activities. Most studies rely on descriptive methods without employing rigorous case study designs that could reveal causal relationships between activities and value transformation. Additionally, research in madrasas predominantly emphasizes curricular interventions, such as classroom-based learning or routine activities, leaving the role of experiential extracurricular activities underexplored (Mustofa et al., 2023; Lilianti et al., 2023). While these studies underscore the importance of habituation and school culture in value internalization, they do not specifically investigate Scouting as a systematic vehicle for fostering values. Consequently, there is a research gap in understanding how Scouting uniquely supports student character development, especially when integrated with religious and moral frameworks within Islamic educational contexts. Addressing this gap can contribute to designing more holistic and effective educational interventions.

Moreover, studies examining leadership and field experience dimensions, which are central to Scouting activities, remain limited. Hanum & Maryani (2023) investigated routine school activities for character education but overlooked practical experiences that allow students to exercise leadership, decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving in real-life scenarios. Likewise, Madjid et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of integrating modern moral concepts into Islamic education but did not explore how these values could be practically internalized through hands-on activities. Therefore, while theoretical frameworks and curricular strategies exist, empirical evidence regarding the

transformation of character values through experiential extracurricular programs is insufficient. This gap indicates that further investigation is necessary to understand the mechanisms, stages, and outcomes of value transformation, particularly in Scouting, which blends practical activities with Islamic teachings to foster holistic character development among students (Azizi et al., 2025; Zaini & Maulidi, 2025).

This research offers novelty by focusing on the process of character value transformation through Scouting activities in Islamic education, which combines experiential learning, leadership practice, and religious cultural integration. Unlike prior studies, it examines not only which values are developed but also how these values are internalized, habituated, and actualized in student behavior. The study highlights the role of mentors, peer interaction, and contextual religious environments in shaping holistic character, providing insights into mechanisms that have not been systematically analyzed. Furthermore, it addresses the integration of extracurricular activities as a complementary strategy to curricular education, offering a comprehensive perspective on how value transformation occurs in practice. This approach contributes to understanding the unique potential of Scouting as an effective medium for developing discipline, responsibility, independence, cooperation, leadership, and religiosity among students.

Based on the identified gaps, this study addresses the central question: How are character values transformed through Scouting activities in Islamic secondary education? The argument posits that Scouting facilitates holistic character development through three stages—internalization, habituation, and actualization—supported by mentors as role models and a religiously contextualized environment. By conducting a qualitative case study, the research investigates the specific processes through which students experience value transformation, the forms of behavioral manifestation, and the implications for broader educational practice. The contribution of this research lies in offering both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for integrating experiential extracurricular activities into character education frameworks, thus providing a model for sustainable and contextually relevant character formation in Islamic schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research type with a descriptive-analytical approach to understand in depth the process of character value transformation through Scouting activities at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Sanggata (Bhangu et al., 2023; De Boer & Zeiler, 2024; Mugenda, 2023). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore the meaning, experience, and social processes that occur contextually in the educational environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The research design used is a case study, which allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth in a real and specific context (Yin, 2017). Case studies are considered relevant because the focus of this research lies in the process of internalization of character values that occurs in a particular educational institution setting. In addition, this approach provides space for a more comprehensive analysis of the interaction between educational actors, extracurricular activities, and madrasah culture in shaping students' character.

The research subjects included madrasah principals, Scout leaders, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students active in Scouting activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account their involvement and understanding of Scouting activities and character education (Patton, 2002). Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe Scouting activities and social interactions that reflect character values, while in-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of the value transformation process. Documentation was used to supplement the data in the form of activity programs, extracurricular curricula, and activity archives. The use of this triangulation method aims to increase the validity and credibility of the data.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model that includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and continuous conclusion drawing/verification (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This process was carried out simultaneously from data collection to the final interpretation stage to ensure consistency and depth of analysis. To maintain data validity, this study used credibility testing techniques through source and method triangulation, transferability testing with detailed contextual descriptions, and dependability and confirmability testing through research trail audits. This approach aligns with qualitative research practices that emphasize analytical rigor and transparency of the research process in producing scientifically accountable findings (MDPI, 2023). Thus, this methodology is expected to produce valid, reliable, and relevant findings in explaining the transformation of character values through Scouting activities in madrasas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character Values Developed in Scouting Activities

The research results show that Scouting activities at Sanggata Junior High School consistently develop a number of core character values, including discipline, responsibility, independence, cooperation, leadership, and religiosity. These values are not only conveyed verbally, but are also internalized through routine activities such as marching drills, camping, community service activities, and the habit of congregational worship. Based on field observations, each Scouting activity is designed with an experiential learning scenario *that* allows students to directly experience the values being taught. For example, camping activities foster independence and responsibility, while group activities strengthen cooperation and social solidarity.

This finding is supported by interviews with Scout leaders who stated that the Scouting learning approach is more effective than classical learning in instilling character values. This is because students are actively involved physically and emotionally, so the values learned are more easily internalized. Theoretically, this finding aligns with the concept of experience-based character education, which emphasizes the importance of direct involvement in the learning process to shape attitudes and behavior (Rasem, 2023) ; (Viratama, 2023) . Furthermore, the religiosity characteristic of madrasas demonstrates the integration of character education and Islamic values, as stated by Amir et al., (2022) that religious culture can strengthen students' character resilience.

However, there is variation in the level of internalization of values among students. Some students show significant behavioral changes, such as increased discipline and responsibility, while others still require intensive coaching. This variation is influenced by family background, individual motivation, and the intensity of involvement in Scouting activities. Therefore, although Scouting activities have proven effective as a means of character development, their success is still influenced by both internal and external factors within the students.

The Process of Transforming Character Values in Scouting Activities

The process of transforming character values in Scouting activities occurs through three main stages: internalization, habituation, and actualization. The internalization stage occurs when students accept and understand character values through explanations, examples, and direct experience. At this stage, the role of Scout leaders is crucial as *role models* who demonstrate behavior consistent with the values taught. Observations show that leaders who consistently demonstrate discipline and responsibility can have a significant impact on students.

The next stage is habituation, the process of becoming accustomed to values through repeated and structured activities. Routine activities such as assembly, weekly practice, and social activities serve as a means of reinforcing the values already understood. During this stage, students begin to demonstrate more stable behavioral changes, such as arriving on time, completing assignments responsibly, and working collaboratively in groups. This habituation process aligns with character development theory, which emphasizes the importance of repetition in building positive habits (Sudarwati, 2023).

The final stage is actualization, which is the ability of students to apply character values in their daily lives, both at school and outside of school. Interviews with teachers indicate that students who are active in Scouting activities tend to have more positive attitudes, such as being more independent, responsible, and having a high level of social awareness. These findings indicate that Scouting activities impact not only behavioral aspects within the school environment but also students' broader social lives. Theoretically, this process reflects the successful transformation of values from the cognitive to the affective and psychomotor stages.

The Role of Supervisors and the Madrasah Environment in Supporting Value Transformation

The research results show that the success of character value transformation through Scouting activities is greatly influenced by the role of the Scoutmaster and the madrasah environment. Scoutmasters serve not only as facilitators but also as role models, providing concrete examples of character value implementation. Interviews with students revealed that they more easily understand and imitate the behavior demonstrated by the Scoutmaster than simply receiving theoretical explanations.

Furthermore, a conducive madrasah environment is also a crucial factor in supporting the value transformation process. Madrasahs with a strong religious culture, such as the practice of congregational prayer and other religious activities, are able to strengthen the character values instilled through Scouting activities. This aligns with previous research showing that a supportive educational environment can increase the effectiveness of character education (Madjid et al., 2023).

However, this study also identified obstacles in the implementation of Scouting activities, such as limited facilities and infrastructure and limited time allocated for extracurricular activities. These obstacles have the potential to hinder the optimization of the character value transformation process. Therefore, better policy support and management are needed to improve the quality of Scouting activities in madrasahs.

Implications of Scouting Activities on the Formation of Student Character

The implications of Scouting activities for student character development are evident in the significant behavioral changes observed in those who actively participate. Data shows that students who actively participate in Scouting have higher levels of discipline, better teamwork skills, and a stronger sense of responsibility than those who are less active. This demonstrates that Scouting activities significantly contribute to the holistic development of student character.

Furthermore, Scouting activities also play a role in enhancing students' self-confidence and leadership skills. Through various activities, such as leadership and decision-making simulations, students are trained to become independent individuals and capable of leading groups. This finding aligns with research by Lilianti et al. (2023), which states that experience-based activities can enhance students' social and emotional development.

However, the findings differ from several previous studies, which found that character education through extracurricular activities had not significantly impacted student behavior. This discrepancy may be due to differences in the research context, the quality of activity implementation, and the support provided by the school environment. In this study, the success of Scouting activities was supported by the integration of religious values and the active involvement of instructors, resulting in a more optimal impact.

Analysis of Factors Influencing Character Value Transformation

The transformation of character values in Scouting activities is influenced by various interrelated factors. Internal factors include student motivation, interest, and readiness to participate in activities. Students with high motivation tend to be more active and more easily internalize character values. Meanwhile, external factors include the role of mentors, support from the madrasah environment, and the availability of facilities and structured activity programs.

Furthermore, school culture also significantly influences the success of value transformation. Madrasahs with a strong religious and disciplinary culture are able to create an environment that supports character formation. This aligns with social reconstruction theory, which emphasizes the crucial role of the social environment in shaping individual behavior (Amir et al., 2022).

Another influencing factor is consistency in the implementation of Scouting activities. Routine and planned activities can strengthen the habituation process of values, resulting in more permanent behavioral changes. Conversely, inconsistent activities tend to be less effective in shaping students' character. Therefore, commitment from all relevant parties is needed to maintain the sustainability and quality of Scouting activities as a means of character education.

The findings of this study provide an important contribution to the development of educational science, particularly in the study of character education based on extracurricular activities. Theoretically, this research reinforces the concept that experiential learning is an effective approach to transforming character values. Furthermore, this study also demonstrates the importance of integrating religious values and practical activities in shaping the character of students in madrasahs.

Practically, this research provides recommendations for education administrators to optimize Scouting activities as part of a character education strategy. Scouting activities serve not only as supplementary activities but also as a primary means of holistically shaping students' character. Therefore, policies are needed to support the development of extracurricular activities as an integral part of the educational curriculum.

Thus, the results of this study not only answer the research objectives, but also provide a real contribution to the development of more effective and contextual character education practices, especially in the madrasa environment.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is that Scouting activities serve as an effective and systematic medium for transforming students' character values in a sustainable manner. Core values such as discipline, responsibility, independence, cooperation, leadership, and religiosity are internalized not only conceptually but also through direct, experiential engagement in various activities. The transformation occurs through interrelated stages of internalization, habituation, and actualization, highlighting that character education is most impactful when cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions are integrated. Additionally, the role of instructors as role models, a supportive madrasah environment, and active student engagement reinforces the multidimensional nature of character formation. These lessons emphasize that experiential, value-based extracurricular programs, particularly those aligned with Islamic principles, can effectively cultivate both moral and social competence among students.

From a scholarly perspective, this research contributes to the literature on experiential learning and Islamic character education by providing empirical evidence on the mechanisms of value transformation through extracurricular activities. It also offers practical implications for educational administrators and policymakers in optimizing Scouting programs for character development.

However, the study is limited by its focus on a single madrasah and qualitative design, which may restrict generalizability. Future research could employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches and explore multiple educational settings to deepen understanding of the effectiveness and contextual factors influencing character value transformation across broader educational contexts.

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