

**Implementation Of Leadership Based On The Value Of Tauhid In Strengthening The Character
Of Students In Vocational High Schools: Literature Review**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of tauhid-based school leadership in strengthening student character in Vocational High Schools (SMK) based on a literature review. The method used is *a literature review* by collecting, examining, and synthesizing various scientific sources relevant to Islamic educational leadership, tauhid-based character education, school culture, and habituation theory. The synthesis results show that transformational prophetic leadership based on the values of *ṣ idq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah* plays a major role as the foundation in directing the vision, policies, and school culture towards a religious and value-oriented environment. The Islamic school culture that is formed then functions as a strategic ecosystem for the internalization of tauhid values through various forms of habituation, such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, religious mentoring, habituation of greetings, smiles, and salutations, time discipline, communication manners, and responsibility in carrying out tasks. Consistent habits, supported by teacher role modeling and positive reinforcement, contribute to strengthening the spiritual, moral, disciplinary, responsible, and socially conscious dimensions of students. In addition, this study identifies supporting factors in the form of leadership role modeling, structured religious programs, positive teacher-student relationships, and the integration of tauhid values into school rules. The inhibiting factors include inconsistent implementation, the influence of the social and digital culture environment, and limited monitoring and evaluation of habits. This study produced a conceptual framework that describes the relationship between the implementation of tauhid-based leadership, Islamic school culture, habit formation, and the process of strengthening students' character in a systemic manner.

Keywords: tauhid-based leadership, Islamic school culture, character education, habit formation, Vocational High School

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the most pressing challenges in contemporary education, including at the vocational high school (SMK) level. Various cases of juvenile delinquency, student violence, moral degradation, and weak ethics in the digital space show that character values have not been optimally internalized in students. This challenge becomes even more complex in vocational high schools because students are not only prepared to master vocational competencies, but are also required to have work characteristics such as discipline, responsibility, trustworthiness, and moral integrity as preparation for entering the world of work and industry. These issues often arise due to the gap between the moral knowledge taught in school and the moral behavior displayed in students' daily lives (M. Hidayat & Subando, 2024) (M. Hidayat & Subando, 2024). This condition is in line with the findings in *the Implementation of Character Education in Schools*, where Herlina & Nurlaely emphasize that the moral crisis in schools occurs due to the "discrepancy between moral knowledge and moral actions" and the weak process of internalizing values through habits and school culture (Herlina & Nurlaely, 2024, p. 4).

This situation calls for a more comprehensive, structured approach to character education based on a strong value ecosystem, particularly in the context of vocational education. A number of studies confirm that the success of character education is greatly influenced by the school's ability to build a school culture based on fundamental values. Schools cannot simply convey values cognitively, but need to implement them through exemplary behavior, habit formation, and the creation of a learning environment that allows for consistent and sustainable internalization of values. In the context of Islamic education, character values do not only originate from social norms and general ethics, but are strongly rooted in the principles of tauhid, which combine spiritual, moral, ethical, and moral dimensions into a single set of values. The Tawhid-Based Character Education Framework offers a comprehensive approach through the concept of 21 Tawhid Characters, which are grouped into four main pillars, namely *Local Wisdom*, *National Wisdom*, *Global Wisdom*, and *Spiritual Wisdom* (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020).

These tauhid-based character values are oriented towards shaping the morals of students who emulate the character of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as *siddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, *fathanah*, and *istiqamah*. The implementation of tauhid values through the 21 Tauhid Character model in the school environment is considered relevant to address the challenges of shaping the character of students, including those in vocational schools. 's research at SMK Amaliah 2 Ciawi shows that habitual religious activities such as reciting the Qur'an, praying in congregation, character mentoring, and moral counseling activities can strengthen the *spiritual wisdom* dimension in students. This finding indicates that character building in vocational schools can be effectively carried out through the structured practice of tauhid values. In the context of higher education, the research Inayah et al. (2024) proves that the implementation of one tauhid value, namely *amanah*, through simple and consistent habits can increase students' personal responsibility in academic life. These findings reinforce the argument that tauhid values have great potential to be internalized in character building across all levels of education. However, the success of implementing tauhid values in strengthening students' character cannot be separated from the leadership role of the principal. Islamic educational leadership literature emphasizes that the principal has a strategic role as a visionary, school culture builder, motivator, mediator, communicator, and moral role model for the entire school community (Gumati, 2021). In the context of vocational schools, principals are not only responsible for administrative management

and achieving vocational competency targets, but also for ensuring that tauhid values are implemented in school policies, programs, and daily practices (Yuliawati et al., 2025). This finding is reinforced by international studies, (Arar et al., 2022) showing that Islamic-based educational leadership places ethical values, justice, moral exemplarity, and spiritual integrity at the core of school management.

This model of leadership based on the value of tauhid is in line with efforts to establish an Islamic school culture as an ecosystem for strengthening student character, Ahmad et al. (2025) shows that the integration of Islamic values such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, responsibility, and ecological awareness into school culture contributes significantly to the formation of students' religious character. Meanwhile, Suherman et al. (2025) prove that kindness-based *leadership* can create habits of empathy, discipline, and mutual respect in Islamic school environments. These findings confirm that the implementation of tauhid-based leadership plays a strategic role in creating a school climate conducive to strengthening student character. To reinforce the position of this study, Table 1 below summarizes seven previous studies relevant to the topics of Islamic value-based leadership, the implementation of tauhid values, and the strengthening of student character.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Relevant Research

No	Researcher & Year	Research Focus	Main Findings	Relevance to the Study
1	Arar et al. (2022)	SLR of Islamic educational leadership	Ethical values, justice, exemplary behavior, and spirituality as the core of Islamic leadership	Theoretical basis of leadership based on the value of tawhid
2	Said et al. (2023)	Islamic school principal leadership	Role modeling, communication, ethical values, and spiritual supervision	Strengthening the role of school leadership
3	Gumati (2021)	Islamic leadership based on local wisdom	The principal as a motivator, mediator, and communicator	Relevant for the implementation of tauhid leadership
4	Yuliawati et al. (2025)	Strategic leadership	Religious programs shape religious character	Leadership implementation in schools
5	Ahmad et al. (2025)	Islamic values in school culture	The values of <i>caliphate</i> and <i>trust</i> strengthen character	Empirical support for Islamic school culture
6	Inayah et al. (2024)	Implementation of the value of <i>trustworthiness</i>	Habituation increases responsibility	Evidence of the effectiveness of the value of tauhid
7	Febriyanti et al. (2024)	Implementation of 21 Tauhid Characters	Habituation strengthens <i>spiritual wisdom</i>	Implementation of tauhid values in vocational school students

Based on a review of these studies, it appears that research on Islamic educational leadership and character education has developed quite extensively. However, most studies still position school leadership and tauhid character education as two parallel studies. The 21 Characteristics of Tauhid model has been studied both conceptually and in partial implementation, such as in the value of *trustworthiness* or the dimension of *spiritual wisdom*, but there has not been much comprehensive

research on how school principals implement tauhid-based leadership to ensure that all tauhid values are systematically internalized in school culture, especially in the context of vocational schools. Similarly, previous studies on school leadership have tended not to integrate leadership practices with the framework of tauhid character. This *research gap* is the basis for the urgency of this study.

In line with the identification of this gap, this study aims to answer three main questions, namely:

(1) how is tauhid-based leadership implemented in strengthening the character of students in vocational high schools based on previous research findings, (2) what are the forms of tauhid values instilled in school life as reported in the literature related to vocational school education, and (3) what factors support and hinder the implementation of tauhid-based leadership in strengthening student character in vocational schools according to the literature review. Based on these questions, this study aims to describe the implementation of tauhid-based leadership, analyze the mechanisms of instilling tauhid values in school culture, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in strengthening the character of vocational school students. Argumentatively, this study asserts that tauhid-based leadership is the main foundation in building an Islamic school culture, and that school culture functions as a strategic ecosystem for the internalization of tauhid values in students. The focus of this study is limited to three main aspects, namely the implementation of tauhid-based leadership by school principals, the habit formation of tauhid values in school life, and the process of character internalization among vocational school students. This study does not analyze the technical aspects of the vocational curriculum () or family factors, so the scope of discussion remains within the managerial, cultural, and pedagogical contexts of the school environment. In terms of novelty, this study offers a conceptual synthesis that integrates tauhid-based school leadership, religious school culture, mechanisms for instilling tauhid values, and the process of strengthening the character of vocational school students in stages. This framework is expected to enrich the academic literature and serve as a conceptual and practical reference for the development of Islamic school leadership in strengthening the character of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Mapping of Key Theories and Concepts

Theory of School Principal Leadership

The theory of school leadership asserts that leadership is the process of influencing and motivating others to achieve common goals (Prasetyo & Hakim, 2022), and is relational in nature because it only exists when there are followers (Suhardi et al., 2022) . In educational institutions, principals are seen as strategic figures who drive the organization and set policy directions (Encu & Sudarma, 2022), as reinforced by Permendikbud No. 6 of 2018, which mandates four main tasks: managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and leadership (Syafarina et al., 2021) (Syafarina et al., 2021) . In addition, principals also play eight important roles as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, motivators, and entrepreneurs, which greatly determine the quality of education (Sari, 2025), so that the quality of education is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of their leadership (F. N. Hidayat & Rugaiyah, 2023). Theoretically, the transformational leadership developed by Bass & Avolio emphasizes four main components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which are capable of driving cultural change and organizational performance through moral exemplary behavior and inspiration (Avolio et al.,

1999). The Islamic perspective adds moral and spiritual dimensions, where leadership is built through vision, faith, altruistic love (Fry, 2003), and the formation of a spiritual vision and mission that enhances organizational commitment (Fairholm, 1996). The values of trustworthiness, *ṣ idq*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah* are at the core of prophetic leadership (Priansa, 2018) which are manifested in moral exemplarity, compassion, deliberation, and justice (Siregar & Musfah, 2022).

, and proven to shape school culture and the character of school members (Batubara et al., 2025). The principal, as a role model, plays a central role in building work ethic, moral climate, value habits, and religious school culture (Furkan, 2013), which makes it the main foundation for the successful implementation of tauhid-based character education, including the habit of 21 Tauhid Characters in school life.

Character Education Theory

Character education is a systematic and purposeful process of instilling moral values, ethics, and positive attitudes through role modeling, habit formation, and the reinforcement of religious and social values. Lickona (1991) defines character education as a conscious effort to help individuals understand, love, and practice core ethical values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring through three components of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991). In the national context, Sunaryo (2021) views character education as an effort to strengthen behavior as a whole, which includes basic talents, mastery of science, and the formation of ethics and morals (Sunaryo, 2021). The Islamic perspective emphasizes that character education is synonymous with moral education, in which Islamic boarding schools have an advantage due to their holistic guidance through a structured lifestyle and intensive religious learning (Maulidiyah, 2023) (Nofiaturrahmah, 2014). Fauziah & Roestamy (2020) then focused character education on tauhid as a "moral-spiritual center" that directs all life activities towards Allah, so that character education is not only moral-social but also spiritual-theological in nature (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020). Herlina & Nurlaely (2024) emphasize that character is formed through education, experience, habituation, and environment, so it needs to be integrated through modeling, habituation, reinforcement, and school culture management. Character education within the framework of national policy is also reinforced through Law No. 20 of 2003, which aims to shape people who are faithful, pious, noble, creative, and responsible (Herlina & Nurlaely, 2024). Thus, tauhid-based character education becomes a relevant conceptual foundation for strengthening the character of students, including in vocational schools that not only demand vocational competence but also work character and moral integrity (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020) (Herlina & Nurlaely, 2024).

Tauhid Character Education Theory

Character education based on tauhid departs from the principle that Allah is the center of behavioral orientation (*God-centered morality*), so that character is not only shaped by social demands, but by an awareness of God that guides all aspects of human life. Fauziah & Roestamy (2020) explain that tauhid character is based on three main foundations: orientation towards Allah (purpose), awareness of Allah's supervision (*murāqabah*), and an intrinsic drive to do *ihsan*, which are then integrated into three dimensions of self-formation: the spiritual dimension (faith, sincerity, worship orientation), the moral dimension (honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, patience, caring, humility), and the action dimension (discipline, work ethic, responsibility)

(Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020) .

This integration is reinforced by the findings of Febriyanti et al. (2024), which show that spiritual wisdom values such as *siddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, *fathanah*, and *istiqamah* are formed through a combination of spiritual awareness, moral attitudes, and habitual actions in teacher-student interactions and school culture (Febriyanti et al., 2024) ; as well as research by Inayah et al. (2024) found that the habit of *amanah* can increase honesty, discipline, and responsibility among students (Inayah et al., 2024) . The goal of tauhid-based education is to shape Muslims who are whole in their faith, morals, and personality through the holistic development of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020) .

Habit Formation Theory

The theory of *habit* formation explains that habits are formed through consistent repetition of behavior until they become part of an individual's identity. Lickona (1991) asserts that habit formation is a core method in character education because it encourages students to automatically do good through repeated practice in their daily lives (Saputra et al., 2023). Ouellette & Wood (1998) state that habits emerge when responses to stimuli are performed repeatedly and consistently, while Orbell et al. (2001) add that when habits are mature, the behavior occurs without much awareness. From a behaviorist perspective, Skinner (1998) explains that reinforcement makes behavior more frequent until it becomes a habit (Syafiq, 2025) . In Islamic education, habit formation is considered important for shaping character through spiritual training (*riyadhah*) and moral education (*ta'dib*) as explained by Al-Ghazali, as well as through a gradual approach as exemplified in the Qur'an (Nata, 1999) . Tawhid values

such as amanah, istiqamah, and sincerity can only be instilled if they are practiced regularly through congregational prayers, tadarus, mentoring, and other religious activities (Herlina & Nurlaely, 2024). Despite its weaknesses, such as the potential to create monotonous routines or stifle creativity, habit formation remains an essential method in character education, especially when combined with teacher role modeling and a conducive school culture. Therefore, habit formation serves as the primary foundation for internalizing the values of amanah, siddiq, tawakal, and istiqamah in tauhid character education (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020).

2. Synthesis and Comparison of Previous Research

A synthesis of previous studies shows that Islamic educational leadership consistently places ethical values, justice, moral exemplarity, and spiritual integrity as the main characteristics of leaders (Arar et al., 2022). School principals are positioned as motivators, mediators, communicators, and drivers of religious culture who determine the direction of values and the moral climate of the school (Gumati, 2021; Furkan, 2013). Research on strategic leadership and *kindness-based leadership* also confirms that transformative leadership has a significant effect on the formation of religious character and positive habits in students (Yuliawati et al., 2025) (Suherman et al., 2025). On the other hand, character education studies emphasize that the internalization of values is not sufficient through cognitive teaching, but requires a value ecosystem that supports consistent habituation and role modeling (Lickona, 1991). From the perspective of tauhid-based education, values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and spiritual integrity become the core of character building for students (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020).

Empirical findings show that instilling these values can improve students' responsibility, discipline, and religious attitudes (Febriyanti et al., 2024) (Inayah et al., 2024). Thus, Islamic leadership, religious school culture, and the mechanism of instilling the values of tauhid are three complementary pillars in strengthening student character.

3. Identification of Knowledge Gaps

A literature review reveals a knowledge gap in the integration of tauhid-based school leadership, character education, and habit formation theory. Research on Islamic leadership often emphasizes the moral qualities of leaders and their role as drivers of religious culture (Arar et al., 2022) (Yuliawati et al., 2025), but it has not comprehensively explained how tauhid-based leadership is systematically implemented to strengthen the character of students, especially in the context of vocational schools. On the other hand, studies on tauhid-based character education often highlight specific values partially, without linking them to the role of school principals as designers of the value habit formation ecosystem. Furthermore, habituation theory, which explains the mechanisms of repetition and reinforcement of behavior, has not been explicitly synergized with school leadership in the framework of tauhid character education. This gap indicates the need for a theoretical synthesis that maps the relationship between tauhid-based leadership, Islamic school culture, value habituation, and the strengthening of student character in an integrative manner.

Presentation of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was developed through the integration of three main theoretical clusters, namely tauhid-based school leadership, character education, and habituation theory. Tauhid-based leadership positions the principal as a central figure who directs school values and culture through vision, policy, and moral exemplarity. The Islamic school culture that is formed then becomes an ecosystem that enables the internalization of tauhid values to take place consistently. Furthermore, through the internalization mechanism, these tauhid values are internalized in students to form a character that is faithful, moral, responsible, and has a work ethic that is relevant to the context of vocational schools.

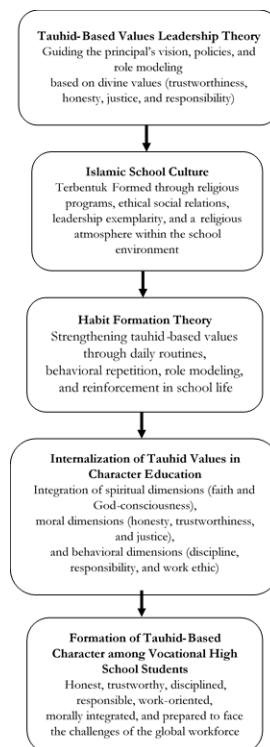


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

This framework illustrates the hierarchical and tiered relationship in the process of strengthening the character of vocational school students. Tauhid-based leadership is the starting point that determines the direction of school values, Islamic school culture functions as an ecosystem for habit formation, and habit formation of values is the main pathway for the continuous internalization of student character.

METHOD

This study uses the literature review method, which is a systematic process of collecting, reading, evaluating, and synthesizing various literature sources to answer research questions. The literature

review approach was chosen because it allows researchers to build a strong theoretical basis while identifying research trends and gaps without collecting field data Herlina et al. (2025) explain that a literature review is a scientific technique for examining theories, research results, and concepts that have developed in a field in depth as a basis for analysis in qualitative research. This is in line

with Amruddin et al. (2022) , which emphasizes that literature-based research provides the conceptual framework needed to understand a phenomenon, especially when the research focus is directed at theory development or concept synthesis. According to , literature studies are an important part of research methods because they form the foundation for researchers to gain theoretical understanding, identify important concepts and variables, and systematically construct a framework of thinking. In the context of qualitative research, documentation in the form of books, journal articles, research reports, proceedings, and other scientific documents is considered a valid source of data, especially when the research objective is to discover patterns, conceptual relationships, and theoretical models through in-depth analysis of written sources. Therefore, this study utilizes literature from national and international journal articles, academic books, scientific proceedings, and other relevant documents related to Islamic educational leadership, tauhid values, character education, and the context of vocational high school (SMK) education.

The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, which included organizing the literature sources, coding key concepts, grouping the main themes, and compiling a synthesis in the form of a conceptual narrative. This technique is in line with the guidelines for document analysis in qualitative research and is reinforced by the principle of source triangulation to maintain the validity, consistency, and depth of the analysis (Herlina et al., 2025) . Through this literature review approach, the study aims to produce a comprehensive theoretical synthesis regarding the implementation of tauhid-based school leadership in strengthening student character, as well as to formulate a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between school leadership, Islamic school culture, tauhid value instillation mechanisms, and student character formation in vocational high schools in a systemic and sustainable manner.

DISCUSSION RESULTS

Based on the literature analysis process conducted through *thematic coding*, three main clusters of findings were identified that are directly related to the focus of this study. The findings are presented systematically according to three areas of focus, namely: (1) the implementation of tauhid-based school leadership in strengthening student character at vocational high schools, (2) the mechanism for instilling tauhid values in school life, and (3) the factors that support and hinder the implementation of tauhid-based leadership in strengthening student character. Through a comparative analysis of various scientific sources, these three clusters of findings show a close relationship between leadership, school culture, habit formation, and the internalization of tauhid values as a series of systemic processes in strengthening student character.

Implementation of Tawhid-Based School Leadership as a Guide for School Culture and Character Building

The first finding shows that the implementation of school leadership based on the value of tauhid plays a central role in directing school culture and strengthening the character of students. The principal not only acts as an administrator but also as a moral leader, vision builder, strategic policy maker, and *role model* for the school community (Arar et al., 2022) . The literature on Islamic leadership emphasizes that prophetic values such as *ṣ idq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah* shape the integrity of leaders and influence the moral commitment of school members (Avolio et al., 1999) (Siregar & Musfah, 2022) . When these values are embodied in leadership practices, school

principals radiate spiritual and ethical exemplary behavior that directly impacts school culture and the behavior of school members.

These findings are in line with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes that leaders with *idealized influence* and *inspirational motivation* are able to drive organizational cultural change and increase collective awareness of value goals (Avolio et al., 1999) (Muflikha & Haryanto, 2019) . In the context of vocational schools, the implementation of tauhid-based leadership also intersects with the need to build work character traits such as discipline, responsibility, integrity, and work ethic, because vocational education requires the integration of vocational competencies and student character.

In addition, the literature shows that tauhid-based leadership plays a role in building a religious school culture that becomes a "value ecosystem" for character building. Through vision, exemplary behavior, and strategic policies, the principal shapes religious routines, communication structures, moral-spiritual symbols, and social interactions that bring tauhid values to life in school life (Furkan, 2013) . The study by Yuliawati et al. emphasizes that Islamic-based strategic leadership contributes significantly to strengthening religious character through the systematic management of religious programs (Yuliawati et al., 2025) . Thus, the implementation of tauhid-based leadership not only influences school culture structurally but also determines the quality of value internalization at the behavioral level of students. This finding forms the basis for understanding the mechanism of tauhid value habituation as explained in the second finding.

Mechanisms for Instilling Tauhid Values in School Life as a Pathway for Character Building

The second finding shows that the habit formation of tauhid values takes place through a series of structured activities, including religious routines, social habits, educational interactions, and teacher role models in school life. Spiritual activities such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, communal prayers, religious mentoring, and moral advice are the main instruments in fostering God-consciousness and moral values such as trustworthiness, honesty, and steadfastness in students (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020) . In addition, social habits such as greeting, smiling, and saying hello, time discipline, cleaning duty , maintaining neatness, and communication etiquette also strengthen the dimensions of social ethics and responsibility. This habit-forming mechanism does not merely create positive routines, but also builds a school atmosphere conducive to the gradual internalization of tauhid values.

The effectiveness of this habit formation is in line with the theory of *habit formation*, which explains that habits are formed through consistent repetition of behavior and reinforced by positive *reinforcement*, resulting in stable and automatic character traits. (Lickona, 1991) (Ouellette & Wood, 1998) . Teachers' exemplary behavior serves as the main stimulus for the formation of students' habits, because students find it easier to imitate real behavior than to accept verbal instruction alone. Herlina & Nurlaely emphasize that schools are strategic environments for forming moral habits through intensive interaction and continuous supervision (Herlina & Nurlaely, 2024) . Thus, instilling the values of tauhid is a systematic pedagogical process through routine, exemplary behavior, positive reinforcement, and consistency, which ultimately results in character building, such as morals, discipline, responsibility, and moral integrity in students. These findings confirm

that the effectiveness of instilling values is greatly influenced by supporting factors and structural obstacles, which are discussed in the third finding.

Supporting Factors and Barriers to the Implementation of Tauhid-Based Leadership

The third finding shows that the success of character building based on tauhid values is influenced by a number of supporting factors that work simultaneously. The exemplary behavior of the principal as a central figure is the most decisive aspect, because the behavior, attitude, and decisions of the leader become the main reference for teachers and students in building a culture of values . A religious school culture characterized by regular worship, polite interactions, the use of respectful language, and an environment that reflects tauhid values creates an ecosystem that allows these values to be lived out in a sustainable manner. Warm and communicative teacher-student interpersonal relationships also strengthen the process of character internalization, as students are more receptive to guidance from figures who make them feel safe and valued (Yuliawati et al., 2025) . Structured religious programs, value-based rules and regulations, and a supportive physical environment (e.g., adequate worship spaces, visual media promoting values, and environmental cleanliness) are additional factors that reinforce the habit of practicing values.

On the other hand, inhibiting factors can weaken the effectiveness of tauhid-based character building if not addressed systematically. The inconsistency of some teachers in providing moral examples is a major obstacle, because exemplary behavior is a pillar of character building; inconsistency between words and actions can trigger resistance from students. The negative influence of digital media and popular culture also contributes to shaping adolescent behavior, requiring adequate control and digital literacy. Additionally, low internal motivation among some students, peer dynamics, and a lack of value reinforcement from families increase the challenges of internalizing tauhid values. Weaknesses in program monitoring and evaluation can also cause inconsistent habits or make it difficult to measure their impact. Thus, these findings confirm that the successful implementation of tauhid-based leadership depends not only on internal school strategies, but also on the school's ability to comprehensively manage external and internal obstacles. These findings clarify that the success of value habituation (second finding) is largely determined by the quality of leadership (first finding), so that the three findings are interrelated and form a complete process flow.

Synthesis: Leadership Strategy, School Culture, and Habituation of 21 Tauhid Characters

A synthesis of the literature review shows that the implementation of tauhid-based school leadership, Islamic school culture, and tauhid value instillation are three interconnected components in a systemic character-building process. The principal's leadership is the main driver in setting the value vision, policy direction, and moral exemplarity, thereby creating a school culture conducive to value internalization. The religious culture that is formed then functions as an ecosystem that supports the practice of habit formation through spiritual and social routines (e.g., congregational prayer, tadarus, time discipline, greetings, social etiquette, and trustworthiness). Through consistent habit formation mechanisms reinforced by teacher role models and positive reinforcement, Tawhid values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, discipline, responsibility, and steadfastness are transformed into the character habits of students. Table 2 below summarizes this synthesis and confirms the causal relationship between the components: how value leadership

gives birth to an Islamic school culture, which in turn enables the continuous habit formation of values, resulting in the strengthening of the character of vocational school students.

Table 2. Synthesis of School Leadership Strategies and the Cultivation of 21 Tauhid Character Traits

Component	Literature Findings	Form of Implementation/Habitu ation	Strengthened Tauhid Values	Implications for Vocational School Students' Character
Vision and value-based policies	The school principal determines the direction of the school's values and culture (Encu & Sudarma, 2022; Yuliawati et al., 2025).	Formulating a school vision based on the value of Tawhid; integrating values into the School Operational Plan (SOP), school regulations, and school programs.	Orientation toward worship, trustworthiness, honesty, and responsibility.	Students understand the school as a space for character and integrity development, not merely compliance with rules.
Exemplary leadership (prophetic–transformational)	Prophetic values shape the integrity of leaders; transformational values change culture through vision and inspiration (Priansa, 2018; Siregar & Musfah, 2022; Avolio et al., 1999).	School principals and teachers demonstrate honest, disciplined, caring, fair, and consistent behavior.	Ş idq, amanah, adil, istiqamah.	Students imitate the behavior of leaders/teachers; character develops through modeling and consistent examples.
Islamic school culture management	School culture becomes an ecosystem of values through routines, symbols, and social relations (Herlina &	Routines of worship; greetings–smiles–salutations; time discipline; cleanliness; etiquette communication; social activities.	God-consciousness, manners, social responsibility.	The formation of discipline, concern, self-control, and moral habits in daily life.

	Nurlaely, 2024; Furkan, 2013).			
Teacher–student relationships (interpersonal communication)	Supportive relationships strengthen character building (Febriyanti et al., 2024).	Personal guidance; value counseling; reflection; mentoring; behavioral coaching.	Empathy, trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility.	Students feel heard and guided; more open to behavioral change.
Habituation and reinforcement system	Habit formation + reinforcement shape automatic behavior (Lickona, 1991; Ouellette & Wood, 1998; Skinner, 1998; Nata, 1999).	Repetition of good habits (honesty, trustworthiness in tasks, proper speech, punctuality) + appreciation & educational sanctions.	Consistency, discipline, reliability, integrity.	Positive character becomes stable; relevant to the character requirements of vocational school work.

Data processed in 2025

The table above shows that the implementation of effective school leadership moves on four main levels: (1) establishing a vision and value-based policies, (2) exemplary leaders and teachers, (3) managing Islamic school culture, and (4) systematic habits reinforced with positive reinforcement. These four levels serve as a conceptual bridge that explains how the values of tauhid can be internalized in school practices to contribute to strengthening the character of vocational school students.

Conceptual Flow: From Leadership to Tauhid-Based Schools

Based on a synthesis of literature on Islamic educational leadership, tauhid-based character education, and habituation theory, it can be understood that strengthening student character is not an instant process, but rather the result of a series of systematically interconnected mechanisms. The principal acts as the main driver who determines the direction of the school's values, vision, and policies, which in turn shape the Islamic school culture and value ecosystem in the school environment (Arar et al., 2022). This school culture is the fertile ground for the continuous cultivation of values through worship routines, teacher role modeling, and structured daily habits (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020; Febriyanti et al., 2024). Through consistent habit formation, the values of tauhid are not only understood cognitively but internalized into a moral-spiritual habitus reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of students, both in the learning context and in social life (Fauziah & Roestamy, 2020).

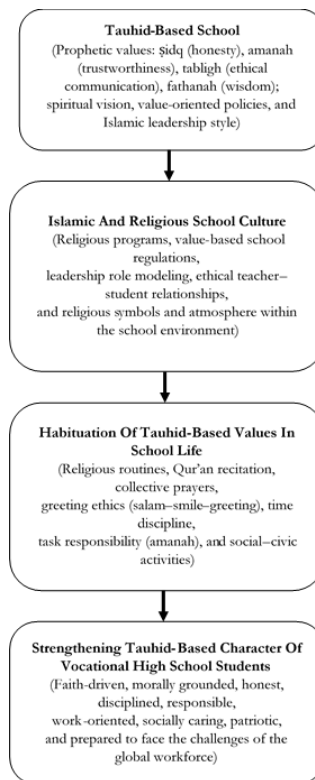


Figure 2. Conceptual Flow

(Implementation of Tauhid-Based Leadership → Islamic School Culture → Habituation of Tauhid Values → Internalization of Values → Strengthening of Vocational School Students' Character)

This conceptual flow emphasizes that strengthening the character of students based on tauhid values is not merely the result of a temporary religious program, but rather the fruit of a chain of processes involving leadership → school culture → habit formation → internalization that run harmoniously and reinforce each other. Thus, school leadership serves as the primary catalyst, while the habit formation of Tauhid values is the core mechanism bridging school culture with the development of SMK students' character—characterized by integrity, discipline, responsibility, and readiness to face global workplace challenges.

CONCLUSION

The results of this *literature review* show that the implementation of tauhid-based school leadership is a strategic foundation in strengthening the character of vocational school (SMK) students. Moral exemplarity, spiritual vision, and school policies based on prophetic values such as *sidq* (honesty), *amanah* (trust/responsibility), *tabligh* (correct communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom) direct the school community towards the same value orientation and shape an Islamic school culture that is conducive to character building. This type of leadership is not only related to administrative aspects, but also builds a school atmosphere that facilitates the continuous internalization of values through the strengthening of norms, practices, and social relationships in the school environment.

In this Islamic school culture, the habit of tauhid values becomes the core mechanism of character building. Spiritual and social routines such as congregational prayers, tadarus, communal prayers, religious mentoring, the habit of greeting with a smile, time discipline, communication etiquette,

and the habit of caring for others () function as systematic vehicles for training students to practice tauhid values in their daily lives. Teachers' exemplary behavior and positive reinforcement accelerate the internalization process so that values such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, and steadfastness are not only understood cognitively but also develop into more stable habits and character traits. In the context of vocational schools, the reinforcement of these values is relevant because they are directly related to work characteristics such as work ethic, integrity, and readiness to face the demands of the world of work.

The process of internalizing tauhid values is strengthened by supporting factors such as visionary leadership, a structured religious school culture, positive teacher-student relationships, and the integration of values into school rules and programs. However, its effectiveness is also influenced by a number of obstacles such as inconsistent role models, the impact of digital culture, adolescent social dynamics, and weak monitoring and evaluation of habit formation programs. These findings confirm that the success of tauhid-based character building requires harmony between leadership, school culture, and a consistent and measurable system of habit formation.

This study provides a conceptual contribution to the development of understanding of tauhid-based school leadership by showing that strengthening student character can only be realized through the integration of value-based leadership, Islamic school culture as an ecosystem, and systemic tauhid value habituation. The resulting conceptual framework can serve as a basis for further research and Islamic education practices in vocational schools that aim to strengthen student character in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

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