MJP Journal of Education and Teaching Learning
Vol.4, No.1 (2026): page start – page end
https://jurnalilmiah.co.id/index.php/MJPJETL



Enculturating Religious Values through Self-Assessment-Based Habituation: A Case Study of the Implementation of Deep Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum

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Article Info

Keywords:
religious value enculturation; religious habituation; self-assessment; deep learning; Islamic Religious Education.

ABSTRACT

Religious character formation remains a challenge in Islamic Religious Education because school-based religious habituation tends to prioritize behavioral compliance over students' intrinsic awareness. This study aimed to analyze the implementation of a self-assessment-based habituation model, identify mechanisms for enculturating religious values, and develop a conceptual model of a Dynamic Religious Enculturation System within the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach. Using a qualitative case study at SMA Negeri 1 Blora, the research involved 11 participants: the principal, two Islamic Religious Education teachers, two homeroom teachers, and six students representing three grade levels. Data from observations, in-depth interviews, and documents were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, with source and methodological triangulation. The findings show that self-assessment functions as a pedagogical mechanism that fosters religious self-awareness, personal agency, and self-regulation through teacher feedback and a continuous habituation cycle. The integration of these mechanisms indicates a shift from rule-driven habituation toward religious value enculturation. However, the extent to which these values are embedded in students' identities and ways of life requires further longitudinal investigation. The resulting model contributes to religious habituation, Deep Learning implementation, and authentic assessment in Islamic Religious Education.

Informasi Artikel

Kata Kunci:

enkulturasi nilai religius; pembiasaan religius; self-assessment; deep learning; Pendidikan Agama Islam.

ABSTRAK

Pembentukan karakter religius masih menjadi tantangan dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam karena pembiasaan keagamaan di sekolah cenderung menekankan kepatuhan perilaku daripada kesadaran intrinsik peserta didik. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi Model Pembiasaan Berbasis Self-Assessment, mengidentifikasi mekanisme enkulturasi nilai religius, dan mengembangkan model konseptual Sistem Enkulturasi Keagamaan Dinamis dalam Kurikulum Merdeka dengan pendekatan Deep Learning. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan desain studi kasus di SMA Negeri 1 Blora dengan 11 informan yang mencakup kepala sekolah, 2 guru PAI, 2 wali kelas, dan 6 peserta didik. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, lalu dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman dengan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa self-assessment berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pedagogis yang mengembangkan religious self-awareness, personal agency, dan self-regulation melalui teacher feedback dan siklus pembiasaan berkelanjutan. Integrasi mekanisme tersebut menunjukkan adanya pergeseran dari pembiasaan yang didorong oleh aturan menuju enkulturasi nilai religius. Namun, sejauh mana nilai tersebut telah tertanam dalam identitas dan cara hidup peserta didik memerlukan kajian longitudinal lebih lanjut. Model yang dihasilkan berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan pembiasaan religius, implementasi Deep Learning, dan asesmen autentik dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam.

Article History

Received: dd/mm/yyyy
Revised: dd/mm/yyyy
Accepted: dd/mm/yyyy

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1. Introduction

Rapid advances in digitalization, globalization, social media, and artificial intelligence (AI) have fundamentally reshaped the landscape of twenty-first-century education. On the one hand, technological progress has created significant opportunities to personalize learning, broaden access to knowledge, and strengthen students' competencies. On the other hand, digital transformation has introduced new challenges, including greater learning distractions, exposure to disinformation, declining opportunities for meaningful social interaction, and shifting value orientations among younger generations [1]. Within this changing landscape, education faces an increasingly complex task: it must move beyond knowledge transmission to cultivate in students the character needed to integrate knowledge, self-awareness, and responsible conduct into everyday life [2]. Rising individualism, declining social concern, intolerance, limited personal responsibility, and forms of religiosity limited to ceremonial observance suggest that value internalization has yet to produce enduring changes in students' ways of life. The internalization of religious values therefore remains a fundamental educational concern, as character education initiatives and religious habituation programs implemented in schools have not yet fully transformed religious values into established ways of thinking, forming attitudes, and acting in students' daily lives.

Although Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is formally intended to nurture individuals who possess faith, piety, and noble character, its implementation across educational settings continues to face challenges in meaningfully realizing these aims [3]. IRE instruction tends to prioritize cognitive mastery (religious knowing), including conceptual understanding, memorization, and knowledge of religious doctrines. Meanwhile, the affective and psychomotor dimensions associated with experiencing, habituating, and embodying religious values in everyday life have received comparatively limited attention [4]. This imbalance is reinforced by evaluation systems that remain largely centered on academic achievement and knowledge-based testing. Consequently, learning success is more often measured through cognitive attainment than through changes in students' attitudes, character, and behavior. Religious character is therefore frequently understood merely as compliance with formal and ceremonial religious practices, without the reflection, self-awareness, and behavioral consistency required for the deeper internalization of values. Yet the essential purpose of Islamic Religious Education is not simply to produce students who understand religious teachings, but to develop individuals who internalize, practice, and embrace Islamic values as a way of life [5]. Religious character education must therefore extend beyond the transmission of religious knowledge toward the internalization of religious values—a transformative process through which values become personal convictions that continually shape how students think, respond, and act.

Recent literature published between 2024 and 2026 indicates that the implementation of Deep Learning in Islamic Religious Education has developed along two major strands. Throughout this article, the capitalized term Deep Learning refers specifically to the pedagogical approach adopted within Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning, rather than to the computational deep learning techniques used in artificial intelligence. The first focuses on transforming the learning process through the principles of Meaningful Learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning as strategies for strengthening religious character, spiritual reflection, metacognitive abilities, and more contextualized learning experiences [6], [7]. The second positions Deep Learning as a paradigm for transforming the broader learning system, with particular emphasis on teacher readiness, authentic assessment, and innovations in the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education [6], [8], [9], [10], [11]. These developments suggest that research has shifted from a narrow concern with improving academic achievement toward more reflective and meaningful learning oriented toward character formation. Similar findings have emerged from studies conducted beyond the context of Islamic Religious Education, indicating that self-generated assessment and reflective assessment strategies can enhance students' learning engagement, critical thinking, and self-regulation. Nevertheless, their implementation has remained largely concentrated on the development of cognitive competencies [12], [13].

Overall, this body of literature has increasingly established Deep Learning as a learning paradigm that integrates cognitive, affective, and reflective dimensions within the educational process. Nevertheless, religious habituation, self-assessment, and the Deep Learning approach have largely been treated as separate components. Studies integrating these three elements into a conceptual mechanism that explains how self-reflection through self-assessment reinforces habituation and ultimately leads to the enculturation of religious values remain relatively limited. This gap provides the conceptual point of departure for the present study, which develops a Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model as a pedagogical mechanism for cultivating students' religious culture within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model in fostering the enculturation of religious values within the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach at SMA Negeri 1 Blora. It also seeks to identify how religious values are cultivated through habituation, self-reflection, and self-assessment, thereby establishing an enduring religious culture among students. Accordingly, the study addresses two research questions: (1) How is the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model implemented to foster the enculturation of religious values within the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning

approach at SMA Negeri 1 Blora? and (2) Through what mechanisms does the model facilitate the enculturation of religious values, and how can these mechanisms be formulated into a conceptual model applicable to the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach? Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic Religious Education scholarship by formulating a conceptual model that explains the relationships among religious habituation, self-assessment, self-reflection, and the enculturation of religious values. Practically, it offers schools a more reflective and sustainable model of religious character education for cultivating students' religious culture. At the policy level, the study provides recommendations for implementing character education in alignment with the Deep Learning paradigm of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The Basic Concept of Enculturation

The concept of enculturation offers a more comprehensive perspective on religious character formation than value internalization, which has long been employed in educational scholarship. Value internalization refers to the psychological process through which individuals accept, understand, and embrace a value until it becomes part of their belief system [14]. Habituation, meanwhile, serves as a pedagogical strategy for cultivating behavior through the consistent repetition of particular activities [15]. Although both approaches contribute to character formation, they do not necessarily produce lasting change when the values being learned are still perceived as external demands or when practices are performed merely as institutional routines under supervision. Enculturation, by contrast, situates values within the lived culture of individuals and communities. Values are therefore not only understood (knowing), experienced (feeling), and practiced (acting), but also consciously reproduced across different contexts as expressions of personal and social identity [16]. Enculturation does not replace internalization or habituation; rather, it represents a further stage that integrates both processes into the development of a sustainable religious culture. This paradigm is increasingly relevant to contemporary character education because educational success is no longer measured simply by the frequency of religious activities, but by the extent to which religious values have become a lived culture in students' everyday lives.

From an anthropological perspective, enculturation refers to the process through which individuals learn, participate in, and gradually reproduce the values, norms, meanings, and practices of their cultural community. Within educational settings, this process is neither entirely unidirectional nor limited to the passive transmission of established values. Instead, it develops through the reciprocal interaction between learners and the cultural environment created within the school [17]. Accordingly, religious value enculturation in this study is understood as an ongoing process through which students engage with religious values, interpret them through reflection, and progressively reproduce them in their everyday practices. This perspective distinguishes enculturation from value internalization: internalization emphasizes the personal acceptance of values, whereas enculturation highlights participation in shared practices and the continuing formation of culture within a community.

Theoretical Foundations of Self-Assessment as a Reflective Mechanism in Character Formation

The limitations of conventional habituation models point to the need for an approach that moves beyond behavioral repetition and actively engages students in evaluating and interpreting their learning experiences. In this context, self-assessment refers to a process through which students consciously evaluate the quality of their learning processes, achievements, and personal development against clearly defined criteria. Assessment, therefore, no longer remains solely under the teacher's authority but develops into a reflective practice of self-evaluation [18]. Recent studies indicate that self-assessment, when designed as a reflective practice, can strengthen students' metacognition, self-regulation, agency, and learning identity [19]. This practice is inseparable from reflection, the capacity to critically revisit one's experiences, decisions, and actions as a basis for continuous improvement. Through repeated reflection, students develop metacognition, or awareness of their own thinking, which enables them to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning and behavior more effectively [20]. This metacognitive development subsequently strengthens self-regulation: the ability to independently manage goals, emotions, and actions in pursuing desired behavioral change [21]. At a more advanced stage, the process fosters learner agency, enabling students to make deliberate decisions about their own learning. It also cultivates ownership of learning, through which students develop a personal commitment to both the learning process and its outcomes, allowing behavioral change to arise from intrinsic awareness rather than external demands or supervision [22].

From the perspective of Islamic education, this framework has a conceptual parallel in muḥāsabah, a process of self-introspection that encourages individuals to evaluate their deeds, intentions, and responsibilities before Allah the Almighty. Muḥāsabah extends beyond the act of self-evaluation by directing individuals toward self-improvement (iṣlāḥ al-nafs) through sustained behavioral regulation [23]. Character, meanwhile, may be understood as the distinctive pattern of moral qualities reflected in an individual's everyday conduct [24]. Integrating self-assessment with muḥāsabah therefore offers a strong theoretical foundation for developing a religious habituation model, as both position self-reflection as the central mechanism linking behavioral habituation to the formation of a deeply rooted awareness of values. Accordingly, the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model proposed in this study is positioned not merely as a strategy for evaluating learning, but as a reflective mechanism that bridges habituation and the enculturation of religious values. Through this process, Islamic

values are no longer practiced solely as routines but gradually become a way of life grounded in students' personal awareness and responsibility [13].

Deep Learning as a Transformative Approach within the Merdeka Curriculum

The Deep Learning approach within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is intended not only to promote an in-depth mastery of concepts but also to create learning experiences that meaningfully connect students' knowledge, awareness, and actions [25]. This paradigm is built upon three complementary pillars: Meaningful Learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning, which together support an authentic and transformative learning process. Meaningful Learning emphasizes connections between knowledge and real-life experiences, enabling students to construct meaning from what they learn. Mindful Learning cultivates awareness through reflection, metacognition, and self-evaluation, helping students understand the reasoning behind their learning-related actions and decisions [26]. Joyful Learning, meanwhile, creates a positive, safe, and engaging learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation and active student participation [27]. Together, these three dimensions demonstrate that Deep Learning cannot be realized solely through innovative instructional strategies; it also requires a mechanism that continuously connects learning experiences with self-reflection.

Contemporary scholarship situates pedagogical deep learning within the broader tradition of the deep approach to learning, which emphasizes intrinsic engagement, the search for underlying meaning, the integration of new and prior knowledge, and the application of understanding beyond immediate assessment demands [28]. Nevertheless, the deep approach to learning and deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum are related but not conceptually identical. The former primarily describes learners' intentions and meaning-oriented engagement with academic content, whereas the latter constitutes a broader pedagogical framework that integrates Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning with students' intellectual, ethical, affective, and physical development [29].

Within this context, self-assessment serves as an essential pedagogical instrument by enabling students to independently evaluate, reflect on, and improve their learning processes and behavior. Through repeated reflective practice, religious habituation is no longer experienced as a mechanical routine but develops into a learning experience that is meaningful, undertaken with mindful awareness, and sustained in a voluntary and joyful manner. Self-assessment-based habituation therefore not only strengthens the implementation of the Deep Learning approach but also provides a mechanism through which religious values are transformed from repeatedly performed behaviors into an internalized way of life. This argument suggests that Deep Learning and self-assessment are closely interrelated, as sustained reflection within deep learning can support the development of awareness, self-regulation, and the enculturation of values.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single-case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model was implemented to foster the enculturation of religious values within the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach. The case study design was selected because it enabled the researchers to examine the phenomenon comprehensively in its real-world context through multiple sources of evidence, thereby providing a holistic account of the processes, dynamics, and mechanisms involved in cultivating religious values [30]. The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Blora, Central Java, Indonesia. The school was purposively selected because it had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum using the Deep Learning approach while incorporating self-assessment into students' religious habituation practices. Eleven participants were recruited through purposive sampling: one principal, two Islamic Religious Education teachers, two homeroom teachers, and six students representing three grade levels, with two students each from Grades 10, 11, and 12. This composition was intended to provide comprehensive perspectives on the planning and implementation of the model, as well as students' experiences of participating in self-assessment-based habituation.

Data were collected between 27 July and 18 September 2026 through observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document review. Observations were conducted on six occasions, with each observation lasting approximately two hours, to directly examine religious habituation practices, the use of self-assessment, and teacher–student interactions during religious habituation activities within the school context. Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. The interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of religious habituation, self-assessment practices, and the cultivation of religious values. During each interview, the researcher took detailed contemporaneous notes to capture the substance and contextual meaning of participants' responses. These notes were expanded immediately after each interview and systematically organized as interview records for qualitative analysis. The participant accounts presented in the findings were faithfully reconstructed from these records to retain the meanings conveyed by the participants; therefore, they should not be interpreted as word-for-word transcriptions. Documentary analysis complemented the interview and observational data by examining self-assessment instruments, records and schedules related to religious activities, and other school documents relevant to the research focus.

Participants were identified using role-based codes: P for the principal, T1 and T2 for the Islamic Religious Education teachers, H1 and H2 for the homeroom teachers, and S1 to S6

for the students. The researcher served as the primary research instrument and was directly involved in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing field data to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation [31]. This role was supported by a semi-structured interview guide, observation sheets, field notes, interview transcripts, and photographic documentation. Data were analyzed iteratively using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which comprised data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification [32]. The credibility of the findings was established through source triangulation by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Methodological triangulation was also conducted by comparing evidence from observations, interviews, and documents, allowing each finding to be cross-verified and interpreted in accordance with the empirical realities observed in the field [33].

Prior to data collection, written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Blora on 27 July 2026. All participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study and agreed to participate voluntarily. During the interview process, participants were also informed that their responses could be used as research data and reported in academic publications. For student participants, assent was obtained from the students, while parental or guardian consent was obtained through the school. To protect confidentiality, participants were identified only by their roles and grade levels, and no personal identifiers are reported in this article. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequences.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Implementing the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model to Enculturate Religious Values within the Merdeka Curriculum Using the Deep Learning Approach

The Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model at SMA Negeri 1 Blora was implemented through a cycle of religious habituation in which self-assessment served as the central mechanism for character formation. Unlike conventional habituation models, which generally emphasize behavioral repetition and teacher-led evaluation, this model provided students with opportunities to independently evaluate their participation, consistency, and progress in religious conduct after completing each series of habituation activities. The principal of SMA Negeri 1 Blora (P) explained the underlying rationale and expectations for the self-assessment model as follows:

> *"We do not want students to participate in religious activities merely because they are required by school rules. We encourage them to evaluate themselves after each habituation activity. When they become aware of what they have accomplished, what remains lacking, and what needs to be improved, character education begins to develop from within rather than as a response to teacher supervision."* (P)

Based on observations, interviews, and document analysis, the model was implemented through five interconnected stages, as summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Stages in the Implementation of the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model

Stage	Main Activities	Role Identified in the Findings	Documented Outcome	Data Sources
Planning Religious Habituation	IRE teachers and school administrators jointly developed the religious habituation program, behavioral indicators, activity schedule, and self-assessment instrument.	The planning process established the indicators that students subsequently used to review their participation and consistency in religious practices.	A religious habituation program, behavioral indicators, activity schedule, and self-assessment instrument were prepared for implementation.	Interviews with the principal and IRE teachers; review of program documents, activity schedules, and the self-assessment instrument.
Implementing Religious Habituation	Students participated in Qur'anic recitation, congregational Dhuha prayer, short religious talks, and the enactment of religious values in school activities.	These activities provided the religious experiences that students later examined through self-observation and self-assessment.	Students acquired direct experience of participating in structured religious habituation practices.	Observations of religious activities; interviews with IRE teachers, homeroom teachers, and students; activity schedules and school documentation.

Conducting Self-Assessment	(a) Self-observation: Students recalled and reviewed the religious activities in which they had participated that day before completing the self-assessment form.	Self-observation directed students' attention to their actual participation and enabled them to identify practices that had or had not been performed consistently.	Students articulated their participation, omissions, and difficulties before assessing their conduct.	Observations of the self-assessment process; interviews with IRE teachers and students; field notes.
	(b) Self-assessment: Students completed a self-assessment form concerning their participation, behavioral consistency, obstacles encountered, and commitments to improvement.	The form elicited students' accounts of their religious practices and prompted them to formulate personal commitments for the following habituation cycle.	Documented student self-reports concerning participation, consistency, obstacles, and intended improvements.	Completed self-assessment forms; observations; interviews with IRE teachers and students.
Providing Teacher Feedback	(a) Reflection: Students discussed their self-assessment responses through reflective questions posed by teachers, including changes in participation and obstacles encountered during religious activities.	The reflective dialogue helped students relate their reported achievements and difficulties to the circumstances influencing their religious practices.	Students identified factors that supported or hindered the consistency of their religious conduct.	Observations of teacher–student interactions; interviews with IRE teachers and students; field notes and self-assessment records.
	(b) Self-regulation: Students formulated improvement targets and personal commitments based on their self-assessment results for the subsequent habituation cycle.	Target-setting translated students' reflections into specific intentions for monitoring and improving their religious practices.	Individual improvement targets and commitments were recorded for the next cycle.	Self-assessment records; observations; interviews with IRE teachers and students.
	(c) Teacher feedback: Teachers provided acknowledgement, clarification, encouragement, and guidance in response to students' self-assessment results and improvement targets.	Teacher feedback validated students' reflections, clarified their proposed targets, and supported continued participation in religious habituation.	Students received context-sensitive reinforcement and guidance for the following cycle.	Observations of feedback sessions; interviews with IRE teachers and students; field notes.
Reinforcing Continuous Habituation	Self-assessment results and improvement commitments informed students' participation in the subsequent period of religious habituation.	The repeated sequence connected religious practice, self-observation, self-assessment, reflection, target setting, and teacher feedback across successive cycles.	A recurring cycle of reflective habituation was identified, indicating a gradual movement toward more self-directed religious practice.	A cross-source synthesis of observations, participant interviews, self-assessment records, activity schedules, and other relevant school documents was conducted.

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Blora did not treat self-assessment merely as an evaluative activity conducted at the end of religious habituation. Instead, self-assessment functioned as the central mechanism connecting the entire process of students' religious character

formation. The model integrates religious habituation, self-observation, reflection, self-regulation, and teacher feedback into a continuous cycle of character development. Religious habituation therefore extends beyond the repetition of activities and becomes a process that actively encourages students to evaluate, improve, and sustain their religious conduct over time. This integrative role is evident from the incorporation of self-assessment at the planning stage, when indicators of religious conduct are formulated. These indicators subsequently guide the implementation of habituation activities, followed by self-observation, completion of the self-assessment instrument, reflection, the formulation of improvement targets, and feedback from teachers.

Observational findings showed that, before completing the self-assessment form, students first engaged in self-observation by recalling the religious activities they had undertaken. Teachers facilitated this process through simple guiding questions that helped students recognize their participation and learning experiences before evaluating themselves. Students then completed a self-assessment form documenting the religious practices they had performed, the obstacles they had encountered, and their commitments to improvement in the subsequent habituation cycle. An Islamic Religious Education teacher (T1) explained:

> *"Before students complete the self-assessment form, we ask them to recall all the religious habituation activities they have undertaken that day. Only after they recognize what they have and have not done do they complete the form. In this way, their assessments are more honest and accurately reflect their own experiences." (*T1)

After engaging in self-observation, students began to recognize their consistency and personal circumstances in carrying out religious practices. This process helped them move beyond simply identifying whether an activity had been completed toward becoming aware of shortcomings in their religious practices. This experience was reflected by a Grade X student (S1):

> *"At first, when I filled in the self-assessment, I only checked whether I had done the activity that day or not. But after looking at it more carefully, I realized that although I had done it, I was not always consistent. I began to realize that I often practiced worship simply because it had become a routine at school. After looking at my own assessment, I could see which parts were still lacking and what I needed to improve." (*S1)

This statement indicates that self-assessment shifted the student's attention from merely completing religious activities to becoming aware of their own religious condition. Recognizing inconsistency and identifying areas for improvement marked the emergence of religious self-awareness as an initial mechanism of religious value enculturation.

Further findings revealed that the self-assessment results did not remain merely administrative records but served as the basis for dialogue between teachers and students. Teachers used the results to pose reflective questions about the factors contributing to students' progress and the difficulties they encountered during religious habituation activities. Students subsequently formulated their own improvement targets before teachers provided reinforcement, clarification, and guidance tailored to their individual circumstances. This pattern demonstrates that teacher feedback was grounded in students' own reflections, making the guidance process more personalized and contextually responsive than evaluations based entirely on teacher judgment.

The central finding of this study extends the conventional understanding of self-assessment from being predominantly a formative assessment instrument to being a mechanism that enables students to independently manage the development of their religious character. This finding is consistent with the study by Janah and Hamami, which demonstrated that systematic self-evaluation through self-assessment can enhance students' metacognitive abilities [34]. More recent research has also indicated that integrating self-assessment into Islamic Religious Education promotes reflective awareness, self-regulation, and a more authentic internalization of religious values. Consequently, students are no longer positioned merely as objects of assessment but become active agents in managing their own learning processes [35].

The findings also reinforce the emerging Deep Learning paradigm in Islamic Religious Education, which positions Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning as interconnected dimensions of character formation. Unlike most previous studies, which have focused primarily on implementing instructional strategies or improving learning outcomes, this study demonstrates that these three principles can be operationalized through a self-assessment-based habituation cycle. Self-observation cultivates Mindful Learning, while reflection on self-assessment results gives rise to Meaningful Learning. Teacher feedback and the formulation of improvement targets further strengthen self-regulation, allowing religious habituation to be sustained over time [36]. Deep Learning therefore extends beyond an instructional approach used in the classroom and evolves into a mechanism for cultivating religious culture through habituation guided by students' own awareness [6]. This finding complements recent studies on the implementation of Deep Learning in Islamic Religious Education, which have largely concentrated on instructional design and character development in general.

3.2. Mechanisms for Enculturating Religious Values through the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model

Analysis of the findings as a whole indicates that the enculturation of religious values at SMA Negeri 1 Blora did not occur linearly through the repetition of religious activities alone. Instead, it emerged from the dynamic interaction among

religious habituation, self-assessment, self-awareness, self-regulation, and teacher reinforcement within each habituation cycle. The synthesis of observation, interview, and documentary evidence revealed that these components influenced and reinforced one another, forming a continuous mechanism through which religious values gradually evolved from practiced behaviors into a lived culture embedded in students' everyday lives. Based on these empirical findings, this study developed a dynamic conceptual model that illustrates the transformation of religious practices into value enculturation through a cyclical, reflective, and mutually reinforcing process. Unlike conventional habituation models, which generally position behavioral repetition as the primary driver of character formation, the proposed model suggests that self-assessment functions as a connecting mechanism that activates personal awareness, promotes self-regulation, and sustains habituation in ways that may gradually contribute to the formation of students' religious identities and everyday practices.

The integration of these mechanisms led to the formulation of the Dynamic Religious Enculturation System, a conceptual model that explains how self-assessment-based habituation can function as a dynamic process of religious value enculturation through self-awareness, personal agency, self-regulation, teacher feedback, and continuous habituation. The Dynamic Religious Enculturation System is not presented as a fully validated theory or as a concept independent of existing enculturation frameworks. It is a contextually derived conceptual model that integrates habituation, reflective self-assessment, personal agency, self-regulation, and pedagogical feedback to explain the observed movement from externally guided religious practices toward increasingly self-directed value enactment.

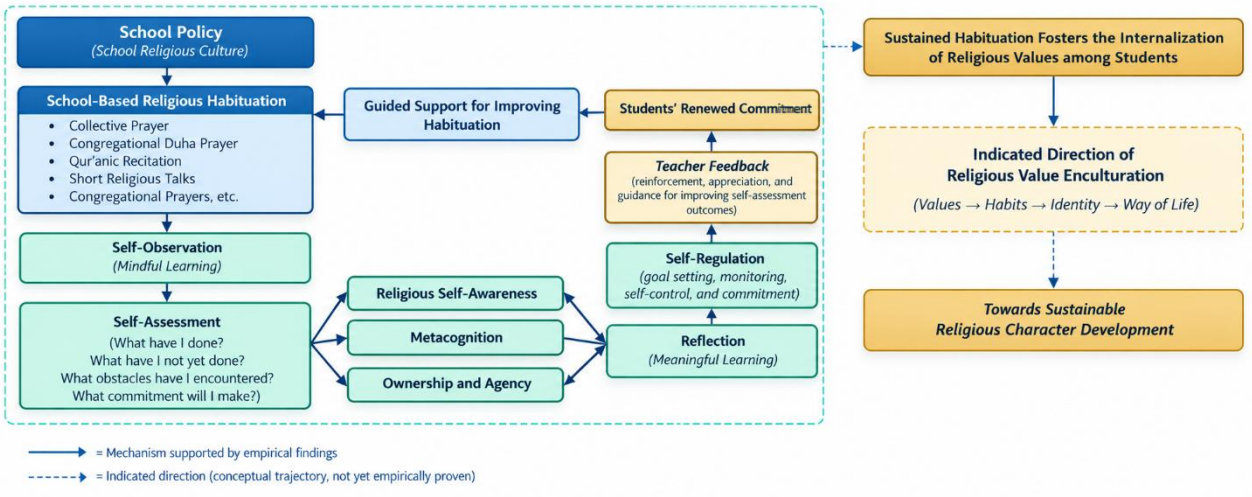


Figure 1 The Dynamic Religious Enculturation System as a Mechanism of Religious Value Enculturation through Self-Assessment-Based Habituation

As illustrated in Figure 1, the model positions self-assessment not merely as an evaluative instrument but as a mechanism that connects students' awareness of religious practices with subsequent efforts to regulate and improve their behavior. The principal contribution of self-assessment lies not in its evaluative function but in its capacity to cultivate religious self-awareness as the foundation of value enculturation. Through self-observation, students no longer viewed religious habituation as a series of activities to be completed merely in response to school requirements. Instead, they began to relate each religious practice to their personal circumstances, experiences, and responsibilities. This shift reflects a movement from externally driven compliance toward internally grounded awareness. Consequently, acts of worship were no longer understood simply as the fulfillment of formal obligations but as reflective practices through which students could understand and meaningfully experience the values embodied within them.

This shift from externally driven compliance toward internally grounded awareness was also reflected in the observations of the homeroom teacher, who noted changes in how students responded to religious habituation after engaging with the self-assessment process. The teacher (H2) explained:

*"From what I have observed, students are no longer engaging in religious activities simply because they are required by the school rules. After completing the self-assessment, some students have become more aware of whether they have been carrying out these activities consistently. When they recognize areas that still need improvement, they begin to make efforts to improve on their own rather than always waiting to be r*eminded." (H2)

This account provides a complementary perspective on the students' experiences by indicating that changes in religious engagement were also observable from the teacher's perspective. The statement reinforces the interpretation that self-assessment

was not limited to recording whether religious activities had been completed, but rather encouraged students to become more attentive to their own religious practices and the reasons underlying their consistency or inconsistency. As a source of triangulation, the homeroom teacher's account therefore supports the finding that religious self-awareness emerged as an important mechanism connecting habituation with the broader process of religious value enculturation.

These findings indicate that self-observation serves as the starting point for developing religious self-awareness by enabling students to recognize the consistency of their behavior, identify areas requiring improvement, and understand the meaning of each habituation practice. In this context, self-assessment connects religious experience with reflective thinking, allowing students to develop a deeper awareness of the reasons, purposes, and moral implications underlying their religious conduct. This finding is consistent with studies that identify self-assessment as an instrument capable of strengthening learning awareness, metacognition, and self-regulation when students are actively involved in evaluating their own learning experiences [37]. The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that, within Islamic Religious Education, self-assessment also functions as a catalyst for religious self-awareness: a personal consciousness through which religious values are embraced as guiding principles for conduct rather than treated merely as knowledge or routine acts of worship.

Once students had developed religious self-awareness, the self-assessment process activated three interrelated internal mechanisms: metacognition, ownership, and agency. With this self-awareness, students began to reflect on why they were not always consistent and what they could do to improve. This process encouraged ownership of religious values and gradually shifted the source of motivation from external instruction to personal initiative. A Grade XI student (S3) described this experience:

> *"I used to improve my behavior mainly when the teacher reminded me. Now, when I see that I am still lacking in some areas of my self-assessment, I feel that I need to work on them myself. I think about what makes me less consistent and try to find ways to do better the next day. So, it is not only because the teacher tells me to, but because I also want to i*mprove myself." (S3)

This statement suggests that students were beginning to take personal responsibility for regulating their religious behavior rather than simply responding to teachers' instructions. The decision to identify the cause of inconsistency and determine ways to improve reflects the emergence of religious personal agency, in which students position themselves as active agents in directing changes in their own religious practices. The term religious personal agency does not denote an entirely new form of agency; rather, it represents a domain-specific application of the established concept of learner agency to religious practice. Its distinctive emphasis lies in students' capacity to initiate, regulate, and sustain religious practices through personal conviction rather than external supervision.

Through repeated self-evaluation, students not only assessed their participation in religious habituation practices but also began to reflect on the reasons underlying the consistency or inconsistency of their religious conduct, thereby engaging their metacognitive capacities. This process subsequently fostered a sense of ownership over religious values, as religious practices were no longer perceived as demands imposed by teachers or school regulations but as personal needs arising from individual awareness. Such awareness, in turn, cultivated agency: the belief that changes in religious conduct were within students' own control, encouraging them to establish personal commitments and initiate improvements without waiting for external direction. Building on the concept of learner ownership and agency [22], this study uses the term religious personal agency to describe the same capacity as it appears in the religious domain: students' capacity to consciously manage, sustain, and further develop their religious conduct through intrinsic motivation. The term is not proposed as a new construct but as a domain-specific application of an established one.

The integration of religious self-awareness, metacognition, ownership, and agency subsequently developed into religious self-regulation: the capacity of students to consciously direct changes in their religious conduct by setting improvement targets, monitoring themselves, regulating their behavior, and maintaining a commitment to consistent religious practice. As students became more aware of their religious behavior and took greater personal responsibility for improvement, the self-assessment process developed into a mechanism for regulating subsequent behavior. Students used the results of their previous assessments to identify specific targets, monitor their progress, and maintain greater consistency in religious practices. A Grade XII (S5) student explained:

> *"When I see from my self-assessment that I am still not consistent, I usually set a target for the next day. For example, if I missed an activity or did not do it properly, I try to make sure that I can do it the next day. Then I check it again in the next assessment to see whether I have improved or not. It helps me keep track of myself and reminds me not to repeat the same thing." (*S5)

This statement illustrates how self-assessment extends beyond reflection into religious self-regulation. The student uses previous assessment results to set an improvement target, monitor subsequent behavior, and evaluate whether the target has been achieved. The process creates a recurring mechanism in which assessment informs the next behavioral decision, allowing religious habituation to develop through continuous self-monitoring and commitment rather than repetition alone. In this study, religious self-regulation is not proposed as a construct separate from established theories of self-regulation. Instead, it refers to the application of self-regulatory processes, including

goal setting, self-monitoring, behavioral control, and commitment maintenance, to the development of consistent religious behavior.

This process was further supported by teacher feedback, which functioned as a reinforcement system rather than merely an evaluative mechanism. Feedback from teachers validated students' self-assessment results, strengthened their confidence in their capacity for growth, and guided their commitments to improvement in the subsequent habituation cycle [38]. Beyond confirming students' reflections, teacher feedback also accelerated the enculturation process by reinforcing intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, and the sustainability of changes in religious conduct [39]. These findings indicate that religious self-regulation and teacher feedback operate as complementary mechanisms that support a gradual shift from externally regulated religious practices toward more personally meaningful and sustained forms of religious conduct.

The enculturation of religious values did not result from the mechanical repetition of religious activities. Rather, it developed through a continuous habituation cycle that integrated self-assessment, reflection, self-regulation, and teacher feedback into each successive iteration. In every cycle, students not only repeated religious practices but also evaluated their experiences, identified obstacles, formulated improvement targets, and received reinforcement from teachers. This mechanism enabled each iteration to generate a deeper and more meaningful learning experience than the preceding cycle. The initial cycles fostered religious self-awareness, which gradually developed into a commitment to behavioral improvement and greater consistency in religious practice. Across successive habituation cycles, participants' accounts suggested that religious values were increasingly understood not merely as externally imposed rules but as personal commitments that could contribute to the longer-term formation of religious identity and everyday conduct. The term Continuous Habituation Cycle is used here as an analytical label for the recurring sequence of religious practice, self-assessment, reflection, self-regulation, and teacher feedback identified in this case. It extends conventional habituation by emphasizing that repetition is accompanied by reflective evaluation and progressive behavioral adjustment rather than the mechanical reproduction of routines.

This interpretation extends international scholarship on self-assessment and self-regulated learning. Panadero (2017) emphasized that self-assessment is most effective when embedded within a self-regulatory cycle of monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement rather than treated as an isolated assessment activity [40]. Andrade (2019) similarly demonstrated that self-assessment enhances learning by enabling students to develop greater awareness, ownership of the learning process, and responsibility for self-improvement [37]. More recent studies on feedback literacy and learner agency have further shown that feedback combined with reflection and self-regulation can strengthen students' engagement in sustained behavioral change rather than merely improving academic achievement [18], [22], [41]. Within this context, the present study makes a conceptual contribution by demonstrating that integrating self-assessment, reflection, self-regulation, and feedback into religious habituation creates a Continuous Habituation Cycle through which religious practices are transformed into the enculturation of religious values. This finding extends the international literature by explaining how self-assessment can function not only as a support for learning but also as a driving mechanism in the development of religious culture within Islamic Religious Education.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted as a qualitative case study at a single senior high school with a relatively limited number of participants, which limits the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the study captured the implementation of self-assessment-based habituation during a specific period rather than longitudinally; therefore, the extent to which religious values become embedded in students' identities and ways of life cannot be established from the present evidence. Third, the study relied primarily on observations, interviews, and document analysis, while students' self-assessment responses may also be influenced by their perceptions of expected religious behavior. Future studies could employ longitudinal designs across multiple schools and combine qualitative evidence with repeated self-assessment data or other complementary measures to examine how the identified mechanisms develop and persist over time.

4. Conclusion

This study provides a conceptual synthesis indicating that religious value enculturation cannot be attributed to the repetition of religious activities alone. The findings suggest that self-assessment functions as a reflective pedagogical mechanism that connects religious habituation with self-observation, religious self-awareness, personal agency, self-regulation, and teacher feedback. Within the Self-Assessment-Based Habituation Model, these interrelated processes form a Continuous Habituation Cycle through which students review their religious practices, identify obstacles, formulate improvement targets, and receive context-sensitive reinforcement from teachers. This mechanism indicates a gradual movement from externally regulated participation towards increasingly self-directed religious practice. Drawing on this empirical pattern, the study proposes the Dynamic Religious Enculturation System as a contextually derived conceptual model for explaining how reflective habituation may support movement toward religious value enculturation within the Merdeka Curriculum's pedagogical Deep Learning approach.

This study extends scholarship on religious habituation, self-assessment, and pedagogical Deep Learning by clarifying the

internal mechanisms through which habituation, reflection, personal agency, self-regulation, and teacher feedback interact in cultivating religious conduct. The proposed Dynamic Religious Enculturation System offers a conceptual framework that may assist educational institutions in designing religious character education that moves beyond behavioral compliance and places greater emphasis on students' awareness, responsibility, and capacity for self-management. Practically, the model may inform the development of authentic assessment practices in Islamic Religious Education by positioning self-assessment not merely as an evaluative instrument, but as a basis for reflective dialogue, individualized teacher feedback, and continuous behavioral improvement. It may also support schools in aligning religious habituation programs with the meaningful and mindful dimensions of the Merdeka Curriculum's pedagogical Deep Learning approach. Given the context-bound and temporally limited nature of the findings, further longitudinal, cross-context, quantitative, and mixed-methods research is needed to examine the model's transferability, test the consistency of its proposed mechanisms, and determine whether the observed movement develops into an enduring religious culture.

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