

Implementation of Friday-Saturday Islamic Boarding School Activities in Developing Religious Character and Cognitive Abilities of Grade 9 Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study analyzes the implementation, implications, and supporting and inhibiting factors of the Friday-Saturday Islamic boarding school activities in developing the religious character and cognitive abilities of Grade 9 students at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang. **Method:** The study used a qualitative case-study approach. The researcher acted as the main instrument. Primary data were obtained from the school, the program coordinator, teachers, and students, while secondary data came from books, journals, documentation, articles, and theses. Data were collected through observation, structured interviews, and documentation, then analyzed through data collection, reduction, data display, verification, and conclusion drawing. **Results:** Program implementation was supported by meetings, teacher duty allocation, a clear work program, activity schedules, and intensive religious and learning activities. The program supported students' ability to perform tahajjud prayer independently, understand hadith, increase memorization, participate in congregational prayer with discipline, answer questions independently without using mobile phones, and present discussion results clearly. Supporting factors included clear programming, teacher involvement, student enthusiasm, religious atmosphere, and facilities, while the main reported obstacle was difficulty waking for tahajjud because students were not accustomed to it. **Novelty:** The study documents a school-based, short residential pesantren model in a non-boarding junior high school that combines religious habituation with discussion and presentation activities to develop religious character and cognitive abilities simultaneously.

INTRODUCTION

Education is expected to produce learners who are not only academically capable but also possess noble character and religious commitment. The thesis positions character formation as a continuous educational task and emphasizes that schools, teachers, families, and other educational environments share responsibility for strengthening students' moral and intellectual development [1], [2].

Religious character is described in the thesis as a foundation for thinking, behaving, and acting according to religious values. Its expression is not limited to ritual worship, but includes discipline, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and concern for others. The school environment therefore becomes an important space for habituating religious behavior through congregational prayer, Qur'an reading, prayer, religious learning, and other recurring activities [3], [4].

Cognitive ability is also treated as a central educational outcome because it is related to thinking, understanding, remembering, analyzing, problem solving, and decision making. The thesis further explains that discussion, case analysis, reflection, questioning,

and challenging tasks can stimulate higher-order thinking and support students' ability to process and communicate knowledge [5], [6].

SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang implements a Friday-Saturday Islamic boarding school activity as a school-based religious program. The program is designed to give students a temporary pesantren-like experience even though the school is not a full boarding institution. Its activities include congregational worship, tahajjud, Qur'an learning, hadith study, aqidah and akhlaq material, discussion, presentation, communal routines, and overnight participation.

Previous studies cited in the thesis discuss Islamic religious coaching, character strengthening, religious habituation, pesantren kilat, and cognitive development [7], [8], [9], [10]. The present study differs by examining, in one case, how a short school-based residential program is implemented, how it relates to both religious character and cognitive abilities, and what supports or hinders its implementation. The objectives are therefore to analyze the implementation of the Friday-Saturday program, its implications for religious character and cognitive abilities, and its supporting and inhibiting factors.



Figure 1. SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang (documentation reproduced from the thesis).

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a qualitative approach with a case-study design at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang. The qualitative design was selected to obtain an in-depth description of how the Friday-Saturday Islamic boarding school activity was implemented and how it was perceived to influence students' religious character and cognitive abilities [11].

The researcher was directly involved as the primary research instrument by observing activities, conducting interviews, and collecting documentation. The research setting was SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang, located on Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 70, Kepanjen, Jombang, East Java.

Primary data sources included the school leadership, the coordinator of the Friday-Saturday activity, teachers, and students. Secondary sources included books, journals, documentation, articles, and theses. Data collection used observation, structured interviews, and documentation. The use of multiple qualitative data sources was intended to obtain a comprehensive description of the phenomenon and to support cross-checking of field information [12]. The observation focused on the activity setting, actors, preparation, implementation, and post-activity process. Documentation included photographs, schedules, research notes, regulations, and school policies.

Data analysis followed four stages stated in the thesis: data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion drawing. Data credibility was checked through prolonged observation, increased persistence, and triangulation. These procedures are consistent with qualitative research practices that emphasize systematic data organization and credibility checking throughout the research process [13].

Table 1. Research Design and Data Sources

Component	Thesis Data	Application in the Study
Design	Qualitative case study	In-depth examination of one school program
Primary sources	School leadership, program coordinator, teachers, Grade 9 students	Interviews and direct field information
Secondary sources	Books, journals, documentation, articles, theses	Contextual and supporting information
Data collection	Observation, structured interviews, documentation	Program setting, actors, routines, perceptions, records
Data analysis	Collection, reduction, display, verification/conclusion	Organization and interpretation of qualitative evidence
Credibility	Prolonged observation, increased persistence, triangulation	Validation of findings across sources and observations

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of the Friday-Saturday program begins with planning and coordination. The thesis reports that before the activity is carried out, meetings are held, teacher duties are distributed, and the organizing team prepares a clear work program and activity schedule. Teachers are involved through a duty system, while other teachers act as presenters. The program is communicated to school leaders, teachers, parents, and students so that all parties understand the sequence and rules of the activity.



Figure 2. Interview documentation with the coordinator of the Friday-Saturday program (reproduced from the thesis).

The thesis includes a detailed schedule for the September 2025 implementation. The source table contains a typographical year entry of “20245” for Friday; in the article table below it is standardized to 2025 because the schedule heading states the 2025/2026 academic year and the following day is recorded as Saturday, 20 September 2025.

Table 2. Friday-Saturday Islamic Boarding School Activity Schedule, September 2025

Day/Date	Time	Activity	Person in Charge
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	16.00-16.15	Participant registration	Committee
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	16.30-17.00	Opening	Principal
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	17.00-17.30	Learning contract; Qur'an recitation and reflection on Surah Luqman	Committee
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	17.30-17.40	Preparation for Maghrib prayer	Committee
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	17.40-18.15	Maghrib congregational prayer and student religious talk	Fahreza; Sahira
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	18.15-19.15	Hadith Arba'in No. 1-3: intention and sincerity; faith, Islam, and ihsan	Ustadz Inung
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	19.15-19.30	Isha congregational prayer	Ustadz Inung
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	19.30-20.00	Break and dinner	Committee

Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	20.00-21.00	Aqidah Akhlaq 1 and group discussion	Ustadzah Ainy
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	21.00-22.00	Aqidah Akhlaq 2; group presentation and fun game	Ustadzah Ainy
Friday, 19 Sept. 2025	22.00-03.15	Night rest	Committee
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	03.15-03.30	Preparation for night prayer	Committee
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	03.30-04.15	Night prayer	Ustadz Inung
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	04.15-05.15	Fajr congregational prayer, Qur'an review, and student religious talk	Ustadz Inung; Sanaz Raditya
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	05.15-05.45	Personal and environmental cleaning	Committee
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	05.45-06.30	Exercise	Committee
Saturday, 20 Sept. 2025	06.30	Return home	Committee

The schedule shows that the program combines religious ritual, religious knowledge, discipline, social routines, discussion, and presentation. Students experience learning outside regular classroom hours and remain in a structured school environment from Friday afternoon until Saturday morning.



Figure 3. Female students participating in the Friday-Saturday program at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang (reproduced from the thesis).

In relation to religious character, the thesis reports two central implications. First, students become able to perform tahajjud prayer more independently and consciously. Second, students improve their understanding of hadith, add to their memorization, and participate in congregational prayer with greater discipline. The program also exposes students to repeated Qur'an reading, adab, environmental cleanliness, punctuality, and communal responsibility.

For cognitive development, the thesis identifies two direct outcomes: students practice answering questions independently without looking at mobile phones, and students are able to present the results of discussions clearly. In the broader discussion chapter, the thesis explains that material delivery gives students additional knowledge, while group discussion and presentation require them to process ideas, construct understanding, and communicate their reasoning.

Table 3. Main Findings Reported in the Thesis

Research Focus	Main Thesis Finding	Observed/Reported Indicator
Implementation	Program is planned before implementation	Meeting, work program, activity schedule, teacher duty allocation
Religious character	Religious habituation develops through structured activities	Independent tahajjud, hadith understanding, memorization, disciplined congregational prayer
Cognitive abilities	Learning activities require active processing and communication	Independent answers without mobile phones; presentation of discussion results
Supporting factors	Clear program and collective support facilitate implementation	Attractive program, teacher involvement, school support, student enthusiasm, religious atmosphere, facilities
Inhibiting factor	Students are not accustomed to night prayer routines	Difficulty waking for tahajjud

The supporting factors described in the thesis include a clear and structured work program, involvement of teachers through duty and presenter roles, school policies that prioritize religious education, student enthusiasm and motivation, a religious atmosphere, and supporting facilities such as the mosque and activity spaces. The thesis also discusses possible technical and motivational constraints, but its summarized finding identifies difficulty waking for tahajjud as the principal inhibiting factor because students are not accustomed to the practice.

Table 4. Relationship Between Program Activities and Reported Educational Outcomes

Program Activity	Religious-Character Relevance	Cognitive Relevance
Qur'an recitation and reflection	Religious habituation and engagement with scripture	Understanding and reflection
Congregational Maghrib, Isha, and Fajr prayers	Discipline and collective worship	Following structured routines
Hadith Arba'in study	Religious knowledge and values	Listening, understanding, remembering
Aqidah-Akhlaq material	Moral and religious understanding	Conceptual comprehension
Group discussion	Cooperation and respectful interaction	Independent thinking and exchange of ideas
Group presentation	Confidence and responsibility	Communication and organization of ideas
Tahajjud/night prayer	Voluntary worship and self-discipline	Self-regulation within a demanding routine
Cleaning and communal activities	Responsibility and care for environment	Practical organization and collaboration

Discussion

The findings indicate that implementation quality is closely connected to preparation. A clear program, schedule, division of teacher duties, and communication with students and parents reduce uncertainty and provide a framework for consistent implementation. This supports the previous study cited in the thesis that religious extracurricular activities are strengthened by planning, clear responsibility, and implementation strategy [7].

The religious-character findings show that character formation in this program does not rely only on classroom explanation. Students repeatedly practice worship and religious routines over an extended period. This is consistent with the character-education perspective cited in the thesis, which emphasizes that character education goes beyond knowing right and wrong and requires habituation so that students understand, feel, and practice good conduct [3]. Similar school-based pesantren activities have also been reported to strengthen students' religious values through intensive religious learning and habituation [14].

The thesis also frames religiosity through dimensions such as religious knowledge, religious practice, religious experience, and religious effect [4]. The Friday-Saturday program contains activities corresponding to these dimensions: hadith and aqidah-akhlaq materials contribute to knowledge; congregational and night prayer contribute to practice; the overnight religious environment provides lived experience; and disciplined behavior represents the application of religious values. This finding also aligns with

evidence that well-organized extracurricular activities can serve as an effective context for developing students' character beyond regular classroom instruction [15].

The cognitive contribution is especially visible in discussion and presentation activities. Students are not only receivers of religious material but are asked to answer questions independently, discuss content, and present group results. These activities are consistent with the thesis discussion of cognition as involving understanding, information processing, problem solving, and the use of knowledge [5], [6]. The emphasis on active processing, understanding, and communication is also relevant to broader accounts of cognitive development during childhood [16].

The program also creates a social environment in which students from different classes can interact, eat, rest, worship, and learn together. Interview data in the thesis show that students value the opportunity to meet peers from other classes and obtain additional religious knowledge. This communal dimension supports solidarity and strengthens the experiential character of the program.

At the same time, the difficulty of waking for tahajjud shows that intensive religious routines require adaptation. The thesis explains that many students rarely perform tahajjud in their usual routine, so mandatory early-morning worship can become a challenge. This finding is important because it indicates that the success of religious habituation depends not only on program design but also on students' previous habits and physical readiness.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The Friday-Saturday Islamic boarding school activity at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang is implemented through structured planning, teacher duty allocation, a clear work program, an activity schedule, stakeholder communication, and an overnight sequence of religious and learning activities. The program has implications for religious character through independent tahajjud, hadith understanding, memorization, congregational prayer, discipline, and religious habituation. It also supports cognitive abilities through independent question answering, group discussion, and presentation. **Implication :** These findings suggest that a short residential religious program can function as a practical school-based strategy for integrating character formation and cognitive learning in a non-boarding junior high school. **Limitation :** Supporting factors include clear programming, teacher involvement, school support, student enthusiasm, a religious environment, and facilities, while the principal summarized obstacle is difficulty waking for tahajjud because students are not accustomed to it. **Future Research :** Future research should examine the long-term effects of the Friday-Saturday Islamic boarding school program on students' religious character, discipline, learning motivation, and cognitive development. Further studies should also involve multiple schools and larger samples to compare program effectiveness across different educational contexts. In addition, future research should investigate effective strategies for helping students develop consistent tahajjud habits and strengthening the sustainability of religious practices after the program ends.

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