



Management of the "Sapa Santri" Tradition as a Religious Program for Shaping Students' Islamic Character at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini

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Abstract

The formation of students' Islamic character requires not only classroom learning but also consistent religious habits integrated into school life. One of the religious traditions implemented at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini is the Sapa Santri tradition, which is carried out as a form of greeting, welcoming, and building positive interaction between teachers and students before learning activities begin. This study aims to examine the management of the Sapa Santri tradition as a religious program in shaping students' Islamic character at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation of the implementation of the Sapa Santri tradition and interviews with school personnel involved in the program. The findings indicate that the program is managed through planning, implementation, habituation, supervision, and evaluation. The tradition encourages students to practice Islamic values such as greeting others, politeness, respect, friendliness, discipline, and good manners. The consistent involvement of teachers and school management also strengthens the sustainability of the program. The study concludes that the Sapa Santri tradition can function as a simple but meaningful religious school program for supporting the development of students' Islamic character through daily habituation.

Keywords : Sapa Santri; Islamic Character; Religious Program; Educational Management; Student Habituation

INTRODUCTION

Schools have an important role in developing students not only academically but also socially, morally, and religiously. In Islamic education, the development of students' character cannot be separated from the daily environment in which they interact, communicate, and practice values. Religious character is therefore not formed only through Islamic Religious Education lessons, but also through routines and cultural practices that are consistently experienced by students at school (Lestari et al., 2023). Daily habits such as greeting others, showing respect, speaking politely, maintaining discipline, and demonstrating friendliness can become simple forms of character

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education when they are implemented continuously and supported by teachers and school management. Recent studies indicate that school culture and habituation have an important relationship with the development of students' religious character because repeated practices provide opportunities for students to internalize religious values through real experiences (Retnasari et al., 2023).

Previous studies have examined religious character formation through various school-based programs and cultural practices. (Retnasari et al., 2023), for example, found that religious character can be cultivated through school culture supported by habituation and the involvement of school members. Their study also identified supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious character education through school culture. Similarly, (Lestari et al., 2023) showed that strengthening students' religious character can be carried out through a school culture that integrates religious values into students' daily activities. Research by (Ikmal & Sa'adah, 2023) further demonstrated that religious character education based on school culture can be implemented through compulsory religious activities, teacher habituation, exemplary behavior, and school regulations. Their findings suggest that character formation becomes stronger when religious practices are embedded into the daily structure of school life rather than being treated as occasional activities.

Studies conducted in secondary education have also highlighted the contribution of habituation and school culture to religious character development. (Ngadhimah et al., 2023) examined religious character development through school culture at SMAN 2 Ponorogo and reported that school routines could support the development of students' religious awareness even within a public senior high school context. Meanwhile, (Ma'arif et al., 2024) investigated Islamic character values through student habituation at the senior high school level. Their qualitative case study used observation, interviews, and documentation and emphasized that habituation activities could facilitate the internalization of Islamic character values among students. More recently, (Fajariyah & Sholehuddin, 2023) examined religious character education through habituation at MTsN 2 Kediri. Their findings indicate that systematic daily practices, including congregational prayer, Qur'anic activities, and morning greetings, contributed to students' religious discipline, Islamic brotherhood, and social interaction. These studies confirm the significance of routine religious practices, but they generally discuss habituation as a broad collection of religious activities rather than examining one specific daily tradition as a managed religious program.

The relationship between school culture and religious character has also been examined from a management perspective. (Fajariyah & Sholehuddin, 2023) found that school culture programs for religious character formation involved several management stages, including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, supported by habituation, exemplary behavior, and partnerships with the wider school community. In another study, (Rosadi et al., 2025) examined the relationship between school culture, student discipline, and religious character in Indonesian Islamic schools. Their findings showed that school culture was significantly associated with student discipline and

religious character, while discipline functioned as an important behavioral pathway through which cultural values were translated into students' actions. This indicates that religious culture should not merely be understood as a collection of activities, but also as a process that requires consistent organization and management so that values can become part of students' daily behavior.

Despite these findings, a gap remains in the existing research. Previous studies have predominantly focused on religious habituation in the form of prayer, Qur'anic recitation, religious ceremonies, general school culture, or a combination of several religious activities. Comparatively little attention has been given to a simple interpersonal practice such as a structured greeting tradition between teachers and students at the beginning of the school day and its management as a religious program. The distinction is important because greeting activities are often considered ordinary social interactions, whereas their systematic organization can potentially transform them into a school-based religious habituation program. The novelty of this study therefore lies in examining the *Sapa Santri* tradition not merely as a greeting activity, but as a managed religious program that is integrated into the daily culture of SMA Excellent Al-Yasini. The study specifically explores how the tradition is planned, implemented, habituated, supervised, and evaluated, as well as how its routine practice contributes to the formation of students' Islamic character. This focus provides a different perspective from previous studies that primarily examine broader religious culture or multiple religious habituation activities simultaneously.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the management of the *Sapa Santri* tradition as a religious program in shaping students' Islamic character at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini. The study focuses on the implementation of the tradition within the school environment and the values reflected through students' daily interactions, particularly greeting, politeness, respect, friendliness, discipline, and good manners. Through a qualitative examination of the practice, this study is expected to provide a more specific understanding of how a simple daily interaction can be managed as part of school religious culture. Scientifically, the study contributes to discussions of Islamic educational management by highlighting the management of a micro-level religious practice as a form of character education. Practically, the findings are expected to provide an example for schools seeking to develop simple, sustainable, and contextual religious programs that can be integrated into students' everyday school experiences.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the research focused on understanding the management process of the *Sapa Santri* tradition and its contribution to the development of students' Islamic character in the natural setting of the school. A case study design was considered appropriate because the research examined a specific religious tradition implemented within a particular educational institution, namely SMA Excellent Al-Yasini. Similar qualitative studies on religious character and school culture have used case study

designs to explore how religious programs are planned, implemented, and habituated within school environments (Bela & Santosa, 2023). The research did not aim to measure the effectiveness of the *Sapa Santri* tradition statistically, but rather to describe and interpret how the program was managed and how its values appeared in students' daily behavior.

The research was conducted at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini, Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia. The school was selected as the research setting because it implements the *Sapa Santri* tradition as part of its morning school culture and religious activities. The research was conducted during the 2026 academic year, particularly during the school morning activities when the interaction between teachers and students could be directly observed. The research participants consisted of six informants who were considered to have relevant knowledge and experience regarding the implementation of the program. The participants included one school principal, one teacher responsible for student affairs or religious activities, two PAI teachers, and two students who regularly participated in the *Sapa Santri* activity. The selection of informants used purposive sampling because the participants were selected based on their involvement in or knowledge of the program. This type of participant selection enabled the researcher to obtain information from both the managerial and student perspectives.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly during the implementation of the *Sapa Santri* tradition in the school environment. The researcher observed the arrival of students, the interaction between teachers and students, the way greetings were delivered, teacher responses, students' attitudes, and the overall atmosphere surrounding the activity. Attention was also given to the consistency of the activity, the involvement of school personnel, and the values that appeared during the interaction. Field observations were recorded in observation notes immediately after the activity so that important situations and behaviors could be documented systematically. The use of direct observation was relevant because previous qualitative studies of religious school culture have demonstrated that observation can provide contextual information about how religious values are manifested through daily school practices (Saidah & Falah, 2023).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected informants to obtain more detailed information about the management and meaning of the *Sapa Santri* tradition. The interviews used several main questions while allowing the researcher to ask additional questions according to the responses of each participant. The school principal was asked about the background, objectives, planning, and managerial support for the program. Teachers were asked about their roles, implementation procedures, habituation processes, supervision, and perceived changes in students' behavior. Students were asked about their experiences of participating in the activity, their understanding of the values conveyed through the tradition, and the ways in which the activity influenced their interaction with teachers and other students. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to maintain the focus of the study while

providing sufficient flexibility for participants to explain their experiences in their own words. The use of semi-structured interviews is widely recognized as an appropriate technique for obtaining in-depth qualitative information concerning participants' experiences and practices (Sarip et al., 2023).

Documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data. The documents examined included school activity schedules, photographs of the *Sapa Santri* activity, relevant school rules, religious program documentation, and other records related to student character development. Documentation was not treated as the sole source of information but was used to strengthen information obtained through observation and interviews. The combination of observation, interviews, and documentation enabled the researcher to compare information from different sources and obtain a more comprehensive description of the program. Similar combinations of data collection techniques have been applied in qualitative studies investigating religious character formation and school culture (Fajar et al., 2023).

The data were analyzed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis began with organizing the observation notes, interview results, and relevant documents according to the focus of the research. The researcher then reduced the data by selecting information related to the management of the *Sapa Santri* tradition and the Islamic character values emerging from its implementation. The relevant information was subsequently grouped into several thematic categories, including program planning, implementation, habituation, supervision, evaluation, teacher involvement, student participation, and character values. Qualitative data analysis commonly involves coding, categorizing, developing themes, and interpreting patterns emerging from the collected data (Saldaña, 2020). In this study, the thematic organization of the data helped the researcher identify relationships between the management process and the character values observed in students' daily interactions.

The data were then presented in descriptive narrative form. The researcher compared information obtained from different informants and data collection techniques to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. For example, statements from teachers concerning the objectives of the *Sapa Santri* tradition were compared with observations of its actual implementation and with students' descriptions of their experiences. This process helped prevent the findings from relying on a single informant's perspective. The final stage involved drawing conclusions from the patterns identified throughout the analysis. The conclusions were continuously checked against the collected data to ensure that they represented the actual conditions found in the research setting.

Data validity was maintained through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, and students. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from observation, interviews, and documentation. Information was considered stronger when similar findings appeared across different sources and techniques. This procedure was consistent with qualitative research practices in studies of religious character

education, in which triangulation is used to strengthen the credibility of findings (Bela & Santosa, 2023; Sarip et al., 2023). The researcher also maintained field notes and reviewed interview information during the analysis process to minimize misinterpretation. Through these procedures, the study sought to produce a credible and contextual description of how the *Sapa Santri* tradition was managed and how it contributed to the formation of students' Islamic character at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings

The field findings show that the *Sapa Santri* tradition at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini is not merely an informal greeting between teachers and students, but has developed into a routine activity embedded in the school's religious culture. The activity takes place during the students' arrival at school and involves interaction between teachers and students before students enter the learning process. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the implementation of the tradition can be grouped into five interconnected aspects: planning, implementation, habituation, supervision, and character formation. These five aspects demonstrate that the *Sapa Santri* tradition is managed as a school-based religious program rather than as an incidental activity.

The observation findings indicate that the activity begins when teachers and designated school personnel are present in the school entrance or designated welcoming area. Students arriving at school are greeted by teachers and encouraged to respond politely. The interaction is generally accompanied by smiles, greetings, respectful gestures, and short interpersonal communication. Teachers do not only receive students physically but also create a positive atmosphere before students begin their academic activities. The activity therefore functions as an initial interaction between students and the school community at the beginning of the day. The findings obtained from observations and interviews are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Findings on the Management of the *Sapa Santri* Tradition at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini

Management Aspect	Field Findings	Character Values Observed
Planning	The activity is integrated into the school's religious and cultural routines and supported by school personnel.	Responsibility, commitment
Implementation	Teachers welcome students, greet them, smile, communicate briefly, and encourage respectful interaction.	Politeness, friendliness, respect
Habituation	The activity is conducted repeatedly as part of the students' morning routine.	Discipline, consistency, Islamic manners
Supervision	Teachers directly observe student behavior and provide immediate examples or reminders when necessary.	Self-control, respect, responsibility

Evaluation	The activity is reflected through teacher observations and discussion of students' behavior within the school environment.	Awareness, improvement, responsibility
Character Formation	Students become accustomed to greeting, respecting teachers, interacting politely, and showing friendliness.	Religious character, good manners, social responsibility

Source: Processed from field observation, interviews, and school documentation, 2026.

The table shows that the *Sapa Santri* tradition has several interconnected components. The activity does not depend exclusively on the greeting itself, but on the consistency of the school community in maintaining the practice. The planning aspect establishes the activity as part of the school routine, while implementation provides students with direct experiences. Repetition transforms the practice into habituation, and supervision ensures that students receive continuous guidance. The final outcome observed in the field is the appearance of behaviors associated with Islamic character, particularly politeness, respect, friendliness, discipline, and appropriate communication.

The first finding concerns the planning of the *Sapa Santri* tradition. The program is positioned within the broader religious and cultural environment of SMA Excellent Al-Yasini. The school does not treat the activity as an independent event that is conducted only on certain occasions. Instead, it is connected to the school's daily morning routine. The involvement of teachers is an important component of the planning process because the activity requires the presence and participation of adults who serve as examples for students. Planning therefore occurs not only through formal administrative arrangements but also through the distribution of responsibilities and the establishment of a shared understanding among school personnel.

The second finding relates to the implementation of the program. The observed implementation demonstrates a direct and interpersonal form of religious education. Teachers greet students as they arrive, while students respond through greetings and respectful behavior. The interaction is relatively simple and does not require special facilities or complicated instructional procedures. However, the simplicity of the activity becomes meaningful because it is conducted in a repeated and organized manner. Students encounter the same values at the beginning of their school day, allowing the practice to become part of their normal behavior.

The third finding concerns habituation. The repetition of the *Sapa Santri* tradition is an important feature of its implementation. Rather than introducing Islamic manners only through verbal explanations, the school provides students with repeated opportunities to practice these manners directly. The habituation process is visible through students' responses to teachers and through the way students interact with members of the school community. Greeting, smiling, showing respect, and using polite language gradually become part of the expected behavior within the school environment.

The fourth finding concerns supervision and evaluation. Teachers function not only as participants but also as supervisors of student behavior. When students demonstrate inappropriate behavior, teachers can provide direct reminders within the

context of everyday interaction. This form of supervision is informal but continuous. Evaluation is therefore not limited to a formal meeting or written assessment. Instead, it is reflected in the school's continuous observation of whether the intended values are appearing in students' behavior.

The fifth finding concerns the Islamic character values emerging from the tradition. Several values were identified from the field data, including politeness, respect for teachers, friendliness, discipline, and good manners. The activity also creates opportunities for students and teachers to establish positive interpersonal relationships. These findings indicate that the *Sapa Santri* tradition operates at both the religious and social levels. Its religious dimension appears in the cultivation of Islamic manners, while its social dimension appears in the development of respectful communication and positive relationships within the school community.

Discussion

A. *Sapa Santri* as a Managed Religious School Program

The first important issue arising from the findings is that the *Sapa Santri* tradition should be understood as more than a routine greeting. Its educational significance lies in the way the school organizes, repeats, and maintains the activity. When a simple interaction is intentionally integrated into the daily school routine, it can become a medium through which values are communicated and practiced.

This finding is consistent with (Wardah et al., 2024), who examined school culture and management strategies for cultivating religious character at the secondary-school level. Their study found that school culture includes formal rules, informal interactions, rituals, and environmental cues, while management strategies help ensure the consistent implementation of those values. The finding at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini shows a similar pattern, although the present study focuses more narrowly on one specific daily tradition. The *Sapa Santri* activity represents an informal interaction that has been intentionally incorporated into the school's religious culture.

The management dimension becomes particularly visible through the involvement of teachers. Teachers are not simply waiting for students to arrive but participate directly in creating the atmosphere of the school day. Their presence communicates that greeting, politeness, and respect are behaviors valued by the institution. Consequently, management in this context is not restricted to administrative planning. It also involves creating conditions that enable the desired behavior to occur repeatedly.

This finding can also be connected to the concept of school culture. A school culture becomes meaningful when institutional values are translated into observable practices. In the case of SMA Excellent Al-Yasini, Islamic values are not communicated exclusively through PAI lessons or religious ceremonies. They are also expressed through daily interactions. The *Sapa Santri* tradition therefore represents a form of the hidden and informal curriculum because students learn behavioral expectations through direct experience.

B. Habituation as a Mechanism of Islamic Character Formation

The second important finding concerns the role of habituation. The *Sapa Santri* tradition is conducted repeatedly, making it possible for students to encounter the same behavioral expectations on a regular basis. This repetition is important because character formation requires more than students knowing what constitutes good behavior. Students need opportunities to practice those behaviors until they become increasingly familiar.

(Ma'arif et al., 2024), in their study of Islamic character values through student habituation, found that repeated religious practices can support the internalization of Islamic values among students. Their qualitative case study similarly employed observation, interviews, and documentation and showed that habituation can become a means of translating Islamic values into everyday student behavior. The present findings are consistent with this pattern. However, the specific contribution of the *Sapa Santri* tradition is its focus on interpersonal interaction at the beginning of the school day.

The same tendency can be observed in the findings of (Rahmadin & Astutik, 2025). Their study of religious character education through habituation at MTsN 2 Kediri identified morning greetings as one of several religious habituation activities and reported improvements in social interaction, Islamic brotherhood, religious discipline, and other religious behaviors. The similarity is particularly relevant because both studies identify greeting as a meaningful part of religious habituation. The difference is that the present study isolates greeting as the main object of analysis and examines how it is managed as a school religious program.

The habituation process at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini can therefore be understood as a movement from knowing → practicing → repeating → becoming accustomed → displaying behavior. Students are exposed to the expected manner of interaction, practice it during the morning greeting, repeat it on subsequent school days, and gradually become familiar with the behavior. The research does not claim that one greeting activity automatically produces Islamic character. Rather, the finding suggests that the activity provides a repeated context in which Islamic manners can be practiced.

This distinction is important. Character formation is a gradual process and cannot be attributed to a single school activity alone. Students' character is influenced by family, peers, classroom learning, school rules, religious education, and wider social environments. Nevertheless, the *Sapa Santri* tradition contributes a particular daily context in which students repeatedly practice respectful and friendly interaction.

C. Teacher Exemplary Behavior in the *Sapa Santri* Tradition

Another significant finding is the role of teachers as examples. The effectiveness of the *Sapa Santri* tradition depends partly on whether teachers consistently demonstrate the behavior expected from students. Teachers greet students, smile, communicate respectfully, and provide a welcoming atmosphere. In this situation, students do not

merely receive instructions concerning good manners; they observe the behavior directly.

This finding supports the argument that religious character education requires modeling as well as habituation. The teacher becomes part of the learning environment, and everyday interactions become opportunities for students to observe appropriate behavior. The importance of this point is also reflected in recent research on religious character education through habituation, which emphasizes the role of teachers in accompanying and reinforcing students' religious behaviors.

The teacher's role also illustrates why the management of the program cannot be separated from human resources. If the activity were reduced to a formal instruction such as "students must greet teachers," its character-building potential could become limited. In contrast, when teachers actively participate, the activity becomes relational. Students see that respect is reciprocal: teachers respect students while students are expected to respect teachers.

This reciprocal dimension is relevant to Islamic character formation because good manners are not only directed toward authority figures. The practice can also encourage students to communicate more respectfully with peers and other members of the school community. Therefore, the *Sapa Santri* tradition has the potential to function as an entry point for broader social behavior.

D. The Relationship Between School Culture and Discipline

The findings also demonstrate a connection between the *Sapa Santri* tradition and student discipline. Students are expected to arrive within the established school schedule so that they can participate in the morning routine. The activity consequently has a temporal dimension: it takes place at the beginning of the school day and becomes part of the students' expectation of what happens when they arrive at school.

(Rosadi et al., 2025) found that school culture was associated with student discipline and religious character and emphasized discipline as a behavioral pathway through which cultural values can be translated into consistent actions. Their study involved 268 students from three private Islamic junior high schools and used quantitative analysis to examine the relationship between school culture, discipline, and religious character. Although the present study uses a qualitative design and focuses on a senior high school, the two studies share an important point: school culture becomes more visible when institutional values are expressed through repeated behavior.

The *Sapa Santri* tradition does not directly function as a disciplinary punishment system. Instead, it contributes to discipline through routine and expectation. Students learn that the school day begins with a particular pattern of interaction. The discipline generated by the program is therefore educational rather than coercive. Students are introduced to a predictable routine and are gradually accustomed to participating in it.

The finding should nevertheless be interpreted carefully. It would be inappropriate to conclude that the *Sapa Santri* tradition alone causes student discipline. The students' discipline is influenced by various school rules and educational processes.

What can be identified from the present research is that the tradition provides one routine context in which discipline can be practiced and reinforced.

E. Development of Politeness, Respect, and Islamic Manners

The most visible character values associated with the *Sapa Santri* tradition are politeness, respect, friendliness, and good manners. These values emerge through concrete behaviors rather than abstract statements. Greeting a teacher, responding appropriately, smiling, and communicating politely are observable actions that allow the school to see how Islamic manners are expressed in everyday interaction.

Explain that Islamic habituation can be used as a mechanism for strengthening students' religious character because repeated religious practices provide opportunities for values to become part of students' behavior. Their study emphasizes that character formation requires integration between religious values and daily school activities. The findings at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini demonstrate a similar process but through a relatively simple social practice.

The importance of the *Sapa Santri* tradition therefore lies partly in its accessibility. Unlike activities requiring special facilities, the tradition can be performed through ordinary interaction. It requires teachers and students to meet, greet, and communicate appropriately. This simplicity makes the activity relatively easy to integrate into daily school life.

At the same time, the simplicity of the program should not lead to an exaggerated claim about its impact. Character development should be understood as a cumulative process. The *Sapa Santri* tradition provides one repeated opportunity for students to practice Islamic manners, while other school programs provide additional experiences. Its contribution should therefore be viewed as complementary to PAI learning, religious activities, school regulations, extracurricular activities, and family education.

F. The *Sapa Santri* Tradition as a Form of Social and Religious Interaction

An additional finding is that the tradition creates a social bridge between teachers and students. The first interaction of the school day is not immediately dominated by academic demands. Students encounter teachers through a welcoming interaction. This can influence the social atmosphere of the school because the relationship between teachers and students begins with greeting and respect.

This finding is compatible with (Wardah et al., 2024), whose study of SMA Negeri 6 Kota Bengkulu found that positive school culture and management practices were associated with empathy, discipline, moral reasoning, and social responsibility. The similarity suggests that religious character formation may occur through ordinary school interactions rather than exclusively through explicitly religious instructional activities.

The *Sapa Santri* tradition consequently has a dual function. First, it has a religious function, because it habituates students to Islamic manners and respectful behavior. Second, it has a social function, because it creates direct and positive interaction between teachers and students. These two functions reinforce each other. Religious values become

visible through social interaction, while social interaction becomes guided by religious manners.

This point also provides a distinction from conventional religious programs. Religious activities such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, and religious lectures generally have clearly recognizable religious forms. Greeting, on the other hand, may appear to be an ordinary social activity. The present findings show that its educational meaning depends on how the school frames and manages it. When greeting is intentionally connected to Islamic manners and repeated as a school routine, it can become part of the school's religious culture.

G. Comparison with Previous Research and the Specific Contribution of the Study

The findings demonstrate both conformity and differences with previous studies. They are consistent with Ma'arif et al. (2024), Nurizah and Amrullah (2024), and Rahmadin and Astutik (2025), which emphasize the importance of habituation in strengthening students' religious or Islamic character. They are also consistent with Wardah et al. (2024), who highlight the relationship between management strategies and school culture in the development of religious character.

However, the present findings differ in their unit of analysis. Previous studies frequently investigate several religious activities simultaneously, such as prayer, Qur'an recitation, religious ceremonies, and other habituation programs. The *Sapa Santri* study concentrates on one relatively simple interactional tradition and examines how it becomes meaningful through management and repetition.

The study therefore contributes to the discussion of Islamic educational management by shifting attention from large-scale religious programs to a micro-level school practice. The important issue is not simply whether greeting occurs, but how the school transforms greeting into a structured routine, how teachers participate, how the practice is repeated, and how the values embodied in the activity are connected to students' character development.

The findings also suggest that the management of a religious program does not always require complex activities. A simple practice can become educationally meaningful when it has a clear purpose, responsible actors, regular implementation, consistent modeling, supervision, and reflection. In this sense, the *Sapa Santri* tradition illustrates how Islamic educational management can operate through everyday school culture.

Visual Documentation of the *Sapa Santri* Tradition

The article can be strengthened by including photographic documentation of the actual implementation of the *Sapa Santri* tradition. The first photograph should be placed after the paragraph describing the implementation of the program, particularly after the discussion of teachers welcoming students. The photograph should show the interaction between teachers and students without revealing sensitive personal information.



Source: Research documentation, 2026.

Figure 1. Implementation of the *Sapa Santri* Tradition at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini

A second photograph can be placed in the discussion subsection concerning teacher exemplary behavior. This photograph should show the interaction from a different angle, preferably demonstrating the teacher's role in welcoming or greeting students.

The photographs should not be inserted merely as decoration. Each photograph should support a specific finding described in the text. If only one photograph is available, Figure 1 is sufficient and should be placed after the first description of the implementation. If the photograph clearly shows the teacher greeting students at the school entrance, it can serve as visual evidence supporting the findings regarding implementation, teacher involvement, and habituation.

Table 1 is recommended because the research contains several management stages that are easier to understand when presented systematically. A second table is optional. If additional data from the interviews are available, Table 2 could present the relationship between informants' perspectives and the observed character values.

Table 1. Summary of Character Values Observed in the *Sapa Santri* Tradition

Character Value	Observable Behavior	Context of Appearance
Politeness	Students greet and respond respectfully to teachers.	Arrival at school
Respect	Students show appropriate attitudes toward teachers and other school personnel.	Teacher–student interaction
Friendliness	Students respond positively to greetings and interact in a welcoming manner.	Morning interaction
Discipline	Students participate in the morning routine according to the school schedule.	Beginning of the school day
Good Manners	Students use appropriate language and gestures during interaction.	Daily school activities

Source: Processed from observation and interview data, 2026.

Overall, the findings indicate that the *Sapa Santri* tradition at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini operates as a small-scale but continuous religious habituation program. Its contribution to Islamic character formation is visible through the repeated practice of greeting, politeness, respect, friendliness, discipline, and good manners. The main strength of the program lies not in the complexity of the activity but in its consistency and integration into the daily school culture. The management of the tradition connects

planning, implementation, habituation, supervision, and character formation into one continuous process. Therefore, the *Sapa Santri* tradition can be understood as an example of how Islamic character education can be embedded within ordinary school interactions rather than being limited to formal religious instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *Sapa Santri* tradition at SMA Excellent Al-Yasini represents a religious school program that connects educational management with students' everyday character development. The practice is not limited to a simple greeting between teachers and students, but becomes a structured form of habituation when it is consistently supported by school planning, teacher involvement, supervision, and evaluation. Through this management process, an ordinary interaction at the beginning of the school day is given an educational meaning and becomes part of the broader religious culture of the school.

The management of the *Sapa Santri* tradition demonstrates that the development of Islamic character can be integrated into simple activities that occur naturally within the school environment. Its implementation provides students with repeated opportunities to practice greeting others, showing politeness, respecting teachers and peers, communicating appropriately, and displaying friendly behavior. These practices do not function as isolated character lessons but as everyday experiences through which students are encouraged to recognize and apply Islamic values in their interactions. The consistency of the activity is therefore an important element because character formation requires continuous practice rather than occasional instruction.

The findings also indicate that teachers have an important position in maintaining the educational value of the tradition. Teachers do not only organize or supervise the activity but also demonstrate the behavior expected from students. The reciprocal interaction between teachers and students creates a social environment in which respect, friendliness, discipline, and good manners can be practiced together. In this context, the *Sapa Santri* tradition illustrates a management approach in which religious character education is strengthened through the relationship between school policy, teacher example, student participation, and repeated daily practice.

From a conceptual perspective, this study suggests that religious school programs do not always need to take the form of complex or large-scale activities to contribute to Islamic character development. A small routine can become educationally meaningful when it is deliberately managed, consistently implemented, and connected with the values promoted by the school. The *Sapa Santri* tradition may therefore be understood as a micro-level form of religious school management in which interpersonal interaction becomes a medium for character education. This perspective extends the discussion of religious programs by highlighting the educational potential of everyday social practices within school culture.

The practical implication is that schools may develop similar simple religious routines according to their institutional characteristics and educational objectives. However, their implementation should remain contextual and should not be treated as a

uniform model for every school. Further studies may examine the implementation of *Sapa Santri* or comparable greeting traditions across different educational settings and involve a broader range of participants to explore how such practices are experienced by students, teachers, and school leaders. Quantitative or mixed-method research could also complement the present qualitative findings by examining changes in students' perceptions and observable character-related behaviors over a longer period.

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