
Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani's Concept of Moral Education and Its Role in Shaping Noble Character: A Case Study at Yanisba Vocational High School, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to examine Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani's concept of moral education and its influence on shaping students' noble character at SMK Yanisba Pontang, Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative approach based on library study, supplemented by field data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on the integration of Sheikh Nawawi's principles into school practices. Findings indicate that moral education is implemented through routine programs, such as congregational prayers, recitation of moral texts, and discipline reinforcement via school regulations. Teacher role-modeling and behavioral habituation proved effective in cultivating moral awareness and producing tangible changes in student attitudes, including discipline, responsibility, politeness, and mutual respect. Theoretically, this study reinforces Sheikh Nawawi's principles, particularly *uswah hasanah* (teachers as role models) and *tadrib al-nafs* (training oneself through habituation). The results emphasize that moral internalization requires practical engagement and consistent repetition of virtuous behavior. Practically, this model can be applied in vocational schools to develop students with strong moral and spiritual character, preparing them to face social and professional challenges effectively.

Keywords: Education; Morality; Noble Character

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15575/ath.v10i1.47018>

Received: 01, 2025. Accepted: 04, 2025. Published: 04, 2025.

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INTRODUCTION

Moral education is an inseparable component of religious education, since what is considered morally good is also regarded as good in religion, and conversely – what religion condemns as evil is also considered immoral. From an Islamic perspective, moral education plays a crucial role because an individual's perfection is strongly influenced by the quality of their morals. Islam teaches that the ideal human being is one who possesses noble character; through such character, a person attains happiness both in this world and in the hereafter. Allah SWT declares:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

“And indeed, you (Muhammad) are of a great moral character.” (QS. Al-Qalam [68]: 4)

The Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent to perfect human morality, and his exemplary character represents the highest embodiment of conformity with the Qur'an, affirming the importance of moral development as guidance toward a righteous life. Furthermore, the Qur'an emphasizes the significance of morality in social relations and communal welfare:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَنِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and transgression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed.” (QS. An-Nahl [16]: 90)

Thus, moral education in Islam not only shapes individual behavior but also forms the foundation for a harmonious and civilized social life.

However, the urgency of this research must be strengthened with empirical data that demonstrate the reality of a moral crisis among today's youth. For example, the Integrity Assessment Survey (SPI) 2024 by the KPK reported that “the education sector integrity index declined from 73.7 in 2023 to 69.5 in 2024, with 45 percent of students involved in exam cheating and 43 percent of universities recording plagiarism cases” (Kabar Pendidikan, 2025). Moreover, KPAI recorded more than 22,000 cases of child abuse in early 2024, while UNICEF reported that around 50 percent of Indonesian adolescents had experienced peer violence (RM.id, 2025). Another report revealed that “67 percent of bullying cases occurred in educational settings, while only 28 percent of students consistently demonstrated tolerant attitudes” (Retizen Republika, 2025).

This phenomenon resonates with the findings of Mashimi (2022), who emphasized that moral learning within Islamic education often occupies an ambivalent position, where moral values intersect with broader socio-political realities. Mashimi writes: “Moral learning within Islamic educational institutions is always embedded within broader political and cultural negotiations” (Islamic Africa, 12[2], p. 262). This means that the moral crisis in schools is not merely an

issue of individual behavior but is also tied to broader social, cultural, and political dynamics.

Good morals do not develop automatically; they require a conscious and structured habituation process. Therefore, character development must be implemented in everyday life. In the context of modern education, morality is often equated with character education. Nasir (2022) stressed that character education based on Islamic doctrines is urgently needed as a safeguard against radicalism and moral degradation. He wrote: "There is an urgent need for character development programs grounded in Islamic doctrines to address moral crises and prevent extremist tendencies among youth" (Religion and Education, 49[4], p. 415). This underscores that moral education not only serves personal development but also functions as a social strategy in addressing contemporary challenges.

In the modern era, young people face different realities due to technological advancement. Technological transformation is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it brings benefits, but on the other, it fosters the erosion of values. In this context, moral education becomes an increasingly important moral safeguard. Mohammadi and Mirzamohammadi (2020) emphasized that even higher education is not immune to moral challenges brought by managerial modernization: "The application of New Public Management in higher education has created serious moral dilemmas, requiring a renewed focus on ethical and spiritual education" (Ethics and Education, 15[1], p. 115). This perspective reinforces the urgency of moral education so that educational institutions produce not only intelligent graduates but also individuals of integrity.

In the Indonesian context, SMK Yanisba Pontang recognizes the importance of moral education in shaping student character. This school integrates moral values into the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and through the role-modeling of teachers and staff. Previous research confirmed that moral education rooted in the Islamic Nusantara tradition—such as the ideas of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani—is more relevant than normative models of character education. Nawawi emphasized balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence, as well as the importance of role-modeling and habituation (Yusutria, 2021).

Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining the application of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education framework in the context of vocational high schools, which often prioritize technical skills over morality. The integration of classical theories (Nawawi, Miskawaih) with contemporary findings (Mashimi, 2022; Nasir, 2022; Mohammadi & Mirzamohammadi, 2020) demonstrates that moral education is both relevant and urgent in addressing the moral crisis faced by the younger generation in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research objectives include: (1) exploring the concept of moral education according to Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani; (2) analyzing its implementation at SMK Yanisba Pontang within academic and non-academic activities; and (3) explaining its contribution to students' character formation.

Participants were determined through purposive sampling, involving 10 students, 5 teachers, and 5 administrative staff directly engaged in moral education. This variation was selected to ensure the findings are more representative.

The research site was focused on SMK Yanisba Pontang, as this school is recognized for integrating moral values into all academic and non-academic activities, making it highly relevant for this study. Data were collected through: (1) participant observation; (2) in-depth interviews; and (3) analysis of school documents. The data were then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), which involved coding, categorization, and thematic analysis, by comparing results from multiple sources. Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation as well as peer review by colleagues. Conducted from March to May 2025, the study found that moral values such as honesty, responsibility, politeness, and consistency in worship were internalized through active and reflective learning. These findings demonstrate the continuity between Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's concept of moral education and its practice at SMK Yanisba Pontang, contributing to character formation as well as students' moral and spiritual development.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani

For Muslims in Indonesia, particularly the people of Banten, the name Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani is far from unfamiliar. He is widely recognized for his vast knowledge of Islam, his authority, and his stature, which is often placed alongside the great imams of Islamic jurisprudence, such as Imam al-Shafi'i. His works are still studied and taught in many Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) across Indonesia. In addition to being a prolific scholar who left behind numerous writings, Syekh Nawawi is also known as a great teacher who played a significant role in shaping the thoughts of prominent founders of Islamic organizations, including Hadratussyaikh KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and KH. Ahmad Dahlan, both of whom studied under him while in Mecca (Abdul Malik, 2014).

Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's full name was Abu 'Abd al-Mu'ti Muhammad Nawawi ibn 'Umar al-Tanara al-Jawi al-Bantani. He was the eldest of seven siblings—four boys and two girls. This great scholar was born in Tanara, Serang-Banten, in 1230 H/1813 CE. He was the son of *Kiai* Umar ibn *Kiyai* Arabi ibn *Kiai* Ali ibn Jamad ibn Ki Janta ibn Ki Masbuqil ibn Ki Masqun ibn Ki Maswi ibn *Tajul Arsy* (*Pangeran Sunyararas*) ibn *Sultan* Hasanuddin ibn Sunan Gunung Djati, and *Nyai* Zubaidah *binti* Singaraja. Both of his parents came from noble descent and strongly emphasized the importance of religious education (Ali & Ma'rufah, 2023).

From an early age, Syekh Nawawi received basic Islamic education directly from his parents. At the age of eight, in 1821, he and his two younger brothers—Tamim and Said—were sent by their father to study with *Kiyai* Sahal, a prominent scholar in Banten.

At the age of fifteen, Nawawi traveled to Mecca to perform the *Haji*. However, after completing the pilgrimage, he chose to remain there because he

was deeply interested in the halaqah learning system in the Grand Mosque (*Masjid al-Haram*). This decision led him to reside in Mecca for three years. During this period, Nawawi lived in Kampung al-Jawi, a settlement for students from the Nusantara. There, he studied under many great Javanese scholars residing in Mecca, such as Syekh Ahmad Khatib Sambas and Syekh Abdul Ghani Bima. Their guidance further sharpened Nawawi's intellectual and scholarly capacity.

Although he briefly returned to his homeland, the unfavorable social conditions and his unwillingness to cooperate with the colonial government prompted him to return to the *Hijaz*. This decision marked the beginning of his international scholarly journey, as he resolved to leave his birthplace and settle permanently in Mecca until the end of his life. He lived in the district of Syi'ib, near *Jabal Qubais*, and together with other Jawi students, continued to deepen his knowledge by attending scholarly gatherings of the Haramain ulama. Due to his intelligence and dedication, Nawawi soon became known as one of the most distinguished students at the Grand Mosque. Indeed, when his teacher, Syekh Ahmad Khatib Sambas, was unable to lead prayers at Masjid al-Haram, Nawawi was entrusted to replace him. From that moment on, he became widely recognized as an imam of the Grand Mosque, earning the title Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani.

Moral Education According to Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani

This research was conducted at SMK Yanisba Pontang, Pontang District, Serang Regency. The main subjects of the study were students, teachers, and administrative staff. Based on these criteria, 10 students, 5 teachers, and 5 administrative staff were designated as key informants. This composition was selected to provide a variety of perspectives according to their respective roles, so that the research findings could more accurately portray the practice of moral education.

The concept of moral education according to Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani emphasizes the integrated development of moral and spiritual character as the main foundation in shaping students' virtuous behavior. Based on document analysis and in-depth interviews with teachers and administrative staff, the key principles underlying this moral education include teacher role-modeling, habituation, integration of moral values into all aspects of life, strengthening of heart and mind, and a holistic approach.

Teacher role-modeling plays an important role as a source of moral behavior for students to emulate, while the strengthening of heart and mind emphasizes the continuous cultivation of values such as honesty, discipline, patience, responsibility, and compassion. The holistic approach ensures that morality is not only studied theoretically but also applied in daily practice, including social interactions, worship, and various school activities.



Figure 1. Interview with a student of SMK Yanisba Pontang

Table 1: Research Subjects at SMK Yanisba Pontang, Indonesia

No	Students' Initials	Gender	Age	Class	Remarks
1	S-01	Male	16	X	Understanding of virtuous morals in schools
2	S-02	Female	16	X	Experience in practicing moral values
3	S-03	Male	17	XI	The relevance of Syekh Nawawi's teachings to students' daily lives
4	S-04	Female	17	XI	Habituation of polite behavior in the classroom
5	S-05	Male	16	X	Teachers' role in cultivating moral values
6	S-06	Female	17	XI	Implementation of moral values through religious activities
7	S-07	Male	18	XII	The challenges of upholding noble character
8	S-08	Female	18	XII	The role of peer influence in character formation
9	S-09	Male	17	XI	The influence of moral instruction on behavioral attitudes
10	S-10	Female	16	X	Reflection on the transformation of attitudes after moral education

The participants of this study comprised ten students from SMK Yanisba Pontang, purposively selected to represent variations in grade level, age, and gender. They were drawn from grades X, XI, and XII, ranging in age from 16 to 18 years, with a relatively balanced distribution between male and female students. The selection was based on the consideration that these students actively engaged in moral education activities at school, thereby ensuring the provision of information relevant to the focus of the research.

Each participant served as a qualitative informant, offering diverse perspectives on Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's concept of moral education and its significance in the cultivation of noble character. Some students emphasized conceptual understandings of noble character, while others highlighted their practical experiences in applying moral values both at school and within the family setting. Additionally, several participants underscored the challenges of maintaining noble conduct among adolescents, as well as the influential roles of teachers and peers in character formation. This diversity of perspectives contributed to the comprehensiveness of the data and strengthened the triangulation process within the study.

Table 2. Auxiliary Research Subjects

No	Initials of Teachers	Position	Teaching Subject	Remarks (Role in the Research)
1	G-01	Homeroom Teacher	Pendidikan Agama Islam (Islamic Religious Education)	Providing insights into strategies for cultivating moral values in the classroom through teacher role-modeling.
2	G-02	Subject Teacher	Indonesian Language.	Explaining the habituation process of instilling courteous conduct in everyday classroom interactions
3	G-03	Subject Teacher	Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (Civic Education)/PKN	Conveying viewpoints on the internalization of moral values through teacher role-modeling in Civic Education instruction
4	G-04	Vice Principal for Student Affairs	Bimbingan Konseling (Guidance and Counseling)	Providing insights into the cultivation of discipline and the habituation of students' moral values beyond the classroom setting

5	G-05	Subject Teacher	Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (<i>History of Islamic Civilization</i>)	Menjelaskan relevansi pemikiran Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani dengan materi pembelajaran dan keteladanan guru dalam konteks keagamaan
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Based on the research findings at SMK Yanisba Pontang, it was found that moral education grounded in the thought of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani is implemented through two main mechanisms: teacher *role-modeling* and *habituation*. These two mechanisms operate synergistically in the process of shaping students' noble character.

Teacher Role-Modeling

Teachers hold a very strategic position as role models in the daily lives of students. An interview with G-01 (Homeroom Teacher, Islamic Education) emphasized that moral development is not sufficient through delivering material alone; it must also be demonstrated through direct role-modeling:

"If it's just lecturing, the students quickly forget, but when they see a teacher being disciplined, polite, and consistently maintaining good conduct, it's easier for them to imitate. So the teacher must be the example first." (Interview with G-01, July 12, 2025)

This aligns with student opinions. S-05 stated that the presence of teachers greatly influences their attitude:

"Teachers are examples for us. If a teacher is punctual, friendly, and disciplined, we also get used to it. So it's not just about the lessons, but also the teacher's behavior that we observe." (Interview with S-05, July 14, 2025)

Another student, S-10, also reflected on a change in behavior after following the teacher's example:

"I used to sometimes procrastinate on assignments, but after being frequently reminded by the teacher and seeing how they are firm yet wise, I learned to be more responsible." (Interview with S-10, July 15, 2025)

These findings confirm that role-modeling is the most effective method for internalizing moral values, as students tend to imitate the real behavior of teachers they encounter daily.

Habituation

In addition to role-modeling, character formation at school is reinforced through consistent habituation. This is evident from the explanation of G-02 (*Indonesian Language Teacher*), who emphasized the importance of cultivating polite behavior:

"Every day I habituate the students to always greet, ask for permission politely, and respect their classmates' opinions. These small habits gradually become part of their character." (Interview with G-02, July 13, 2025)

G-04 (Vice Principal of Student Affairs/Guidance Counselor) also added that school discipline is part of the habituation strategy:

"We habituate students to perform congregational prayers, attend regular religious gatherings, and follow school rules. From these habits, discipline and responsibility are developed." (Interview with G-04, July 13, 2025)

From the students' perspective, S-04 acknowledged the benefits of habituating polite behavior in class:

"In class, we get used to not interrupting, always respecting the teacher. Over time, this becomes a habit, even outside of class." (Interview with S-04, July 14, 2025)

Meanwhile, S-06 emphasized that religious activities at school strengthen their moral behavior:

"Activities like congregational prayers make us more disciplined and aware of being observed, so we automatically become more careful in our behavior." (Interview with S-06, July 15, 2025)

Thus, habituation has proven effective in internalizing moral values because it is practiced repeatedly until it becomes part of the students' character.

Synergy of Role-Modeling and Habituation

The research findings indicate a synergy between role-modeling and habituation. Teacher role-modeling provides real-life examples, while habituation reinforces these values through consistent routines. Even though students face challenges from influences outside school, as expressed by S-07:

"Maintaining good character is difficult outside school because many friends don't care. But if it has been habituated at school, at least there is a reminder." (Interview with S-07, July 16, 2025)

Peer influence is also an important factor, as acknowledged by S-08:

"If friends are good, we also get influenced. But if there are naughty ones, that can affect us too. Luckily, at school, there are many rules and teachers who always remind us." (Interview with S-08, July 16, 2025)

These statements show that the consistency between teacher role-modeling and the school's habituation programs is a key factor in maintaining students' moral character, even in challenging environments.

Table 3. Supporting Research Subjects – Administrative Staff

No	Staff Initials	Position	Work Unit	Description (Role in the Study)
1	A-01	Head of Administration	General Administration	Providing information regarding the school's policies on character (<i>moral</i>) development
2	A-02	Administrative Staff	Student Affairs	Presenting and analyzing data on students' attendance, discipline, and behavioral patterns

3	A-03	Administrative Staff	Academic Affairs	Providing information on academic records and their relation to character development
4	A-04	Administrative Staff	Public Relations (PR)	Providing information on the school's collaboration with parents in character development
5	A-05	Administrative Staff	Library	Providing perspectives on literacy facilities that support character education

In addition to students and teachers, this study also involved the administrative staff of SMK Yanisba Pontang as supporting subjects. The presence of administrative staff is important because they play a strategic role in supporting the smooth implementation of the educational process, including aspects of students' character development through school policies, data recording, and the management of supporting activities.

The administrative staff involved consisted of the head of administration, student affairs staff, academic affairs staff, public relations staff, and library staff. The head of administration provided information regarding school policies related to character development. The student affairs staff conveyed data related to discipline, attendance, and student behavior at school. The academic affairs staff explained the relationship between academic records and students' character development. The public relations staff provided insights into the school's collaboration with parents in character education, while the library staff offered perspectives on literacy facilities that support the strengthening of character education.

Through the involvement of administrative staff, this study obtained supporting data that complemented information from students and teachers, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of character education at SMK Yanisba Pontang.

Table 4. Principal: Supporting Research Subjects

No	Initials	Position	Work Unit	Description (Role in the Study)
1	K-01	Principal	Vocational High School Management	Providing information on the school's vision, mission, and policies in fostering students' character in accordance with the educational values of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani

The principal of SMK Yanisba Pontang was also involved as a supporting subject in this study. As the highest leader in the school environment, the principal plays a central role in determining the direction of policies, vision, and mission related to the development of students' character. Through interviews, the principal provided information concerning managerial strategies, habituation programs, and institutional policies designed to instill noble moral values in accordance with Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani's concept of education.

The involvement of the principal is crucial since their perspectives and policies serve as a reference for teachers, staff, and students in carrying out educational activities. Thus, the information from the principal complements the data obtained from students, teachers, and administrative staff, providing a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of character education at SMK Yanisba Pontang.

Presentation of Findings Based on Themes/Thematic Codes

Based on data triangulation through observation, interviews, and documentation, this study found that the implementation of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani's concept of character education at SMK Yanisba Pontang is effectively carried out through the synergy of teacher *role-modeling* and *habituation*, which impacts the formation of students' noble character.

Teacher role-modeling emerged as the main factor in guiding students. Teachers do not merely convey moral values verbally but also demonstrate real behavior that students can emulate. This is in line with the principle of *uswah hasanah* (good example) in Sheikh Nawawi's theory of character education. One student, S-02, stated:

"Now I am more accustomed to greeting others and being polite because the teachers here always set an example first."

Teacher G-01 emphasized:

"We not only deliver the material but also strive to be role models. For example, teachers always participate in congregational prayers so that students can directly see the importance of consistency."

In addition, habituation serves as a mechanism to reinforce the internalization of moral values. Observations and documentation revealed that routine activities such as congregational prayers, religious study sessions, greeting habits, and adherence to classroom rules help students develop discipline and politeness. Student S-04 noted:

"In class, we are accustomed to not interrupting and always respecting the teacher. Over time, it becomes a habit, even outside the classroom."

Homeroom teacher G-02 added:

"Small habits, such as praying before studying and getting used to greeting, actually have a significant influence on students' daily attitudes."

Documentation results show concrete evidence of changes in student behavior, including reduced tardiness, fewer violations of school rules, and increased participation in religious and extracurricular activities. Student S-06 emphasized:

"Activities such as congregational prayers make us more disciplined and careful in our behavior."



Figure 2. Documentation of Congregational Prayers at the SMK Yanisba Mosque, one form of practice of moral values towards Allah

Integratively, these findings show that teacher role-modeling and routine habituation complement each other in shaping students' noble character. Role-modeling provides tangible examples to be emulated, while habituation strengthens moral values until they become consistent behavior. This approach is in line with Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani's principles of character education, which emphasize the importance of combining instruction, exemplary conduct, and repeated practice in forming noble character. Thus, students at SMK Yanisba Pontang not only understand moral values but also internalize them in their daily lives.

Table 5. Themes/Thematic Codes, Indicators, and Interview Quotations

No	Theme / Thematic Code	Indicator	Interview Quotation
1	Teacher Role- Modeling	Teachers serve as role models in discipline, politeness, and responsibility – Students imitate the teachers' behavior	Student S-02: "Now I am more accustomed to greeting others and being polite because the teachers here always set an example first." Student S-05: "I learned to be punctual and responsible from the way teachers complete their tasks with discipline."

Teacher G-01: "We do not only deliver the material, but we also strive to be role models. For example, teachers always join congregational prayers so that students directly see the importance of consistency."			
2	Habituation	Routine activities such as congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and greetings – Discipline in following classroom rules	<p>Student S-04: "In class, we are accustomed to not interrupting and always respecting the teacher. Over time, it becomes a habit, even outside the classroom."</p> <p>Student S-06: "Participating in religious study sessions and congregational prayers makes us more accustomed to discipline and valuing time."</p> <p>Homeroom Teacher G-02: "Small habits, such as praying before studying and getting used to greeting, have a significant impact on students' daily attitudes."</p>
3	Students' Attitude Changes & Discipline	Reduced tardiness – Decreased violations of school rules – Active participation in religious and extracurricular activities	<p>Student S-06: "Activities such as congregational prayers make us more disciplined and careful in our behavior."</p> <p>Student S-10: "After several months, I became more responsible in completing assignments and respecting my peers."</p> <p>Principal: "We have observed real improvements in students' discipline records and participation, which indicates the effective internalization of noble character."</p>

Interpretation of Findings with Reference to the Works of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani

Based on the research findings, it can be interpreted that the implementation of character education at SMK Yanisba Pontang aligns with the moral education principles put forward by Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani. These

findings cover three main aspects: teacher *role-modeling*, *habituation*, and students' attitude changes, which together shape students' noble character.

Teacher Role-Modeling

The role-modeling of teachers, as revealed through interviews and observations, shows that teachers become *uswah hasanah* (good examples) for students. Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani emphasizes the importance of teachers as role models in character formation, since students naturally imitate the behavior of their teachers (al-Bantani, 2007: 42). This can be seen in the discipline, politeness, and responsibility displayed by teachers, which were imitated by students, as acknowledged by Student S-02:

"Now I am more accustomed to greeting others and being polite, because the teachers here always set an example first."

This interpretation shows that role-modeling is not merely verbal instruction, but serves as a medium for the internalization of moral values through direct observation. Thus, teacher role-modeling genuinely fosters students' moral awareness in line with Sheikh Nawawi's principles.

Habituation

The habituation of good behavior through routine activities such as congregational prayers, religious study sessions, and adherence to classroom rules reflects the application of the principle of *tadrib al-nafs* (*self-training*) according to Sheikh Nawawi (al-Bantani, 2007: 55). These activities enable students to cultivate moral behavior until it becomes character. Student S-04 expressed:

"In class, we are accustomed to not interrupting and always respecting the teacher. Over time, it becomes a habit, even outside the classroom."

This finding reinforces the concept that repeated habituation can consistently shape noble character, as moral practices that are continually repeated become embedded in students' souls.

Students' Attitude Changes and Discipline

Document analysis shows an increase in discipline, responsibility, and participation in religious as well as extracurricular activities. This is in line with Sheikh Nawawi's view that noble character must be reflected in real actions, not merely knowledge (al-Bantani, 2007: 61). These changes in attitude affirm the effectiveness of combining role-modeling and habituation in the internalization of noble character.

Synergy of Role-Modeling and Habituation

An integrative interpretation demonstrates that teacher role-modeling and routine habituation work synergistically, as advocated by Sheikh Nawawi. *role-modeling* provides concrete examples, while habituation strengthens the internalization of moral values until they become stable behavior. Thus, character education at SMK Yanisba Pontang not only creates cognitive understanding but also shapes noble character that is manifested in students' daily conduct.

Table 6. Synthesis of Findings with Reference to Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani

No	Theme / Thematic Code	Indicators / Findings	Interview Quotation	Reference to Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani
1	Teacher Role-Modeling	Teachers serve as role models in discipline, politeness, and responsibility – students imitate their behavior.	<p>Student S-02: “Now I have become more accustomed to greeting and being polite, because the teachers here always set the example first.”</p> <p>Student S-05: “I learned punctuality and responsibility from the way the teachers carry out their duties with discipline.”</p> <p>Teacher G-01: “We do not only deliver the material, but also strive to be role models. For example, teachers always join the congregational prayer so that students can directly see the importance of consistency.”</p>	“Shaykh Nawawi emphasizes <i>uswah hasanah</i> (good role modeling) as a medium for character formation, since students imitate the teacher’s behavior in daily life (al-Bantani, 2007: 42).”
2	Habituation	“Routine activities such as congregational prayer,	Student S-04: “In class, we are used to not interrupting and always	“Shaykh Nawawi emphasizes <i>tadrīb al-nafs</i> (self-training) to habituate good behavior through

		religious study, and greeting – Discipline in following classroom rules.”	respecting the teacher. Over time, this has become a habit, even outside the classroom.”	repetition so that noble character becomes ingrained in students (al-Bantani, 2007: 55).”
			Student S-06: “Taking part in religious study sessions and congregational prayers has made us accustomed to being disciplined and valuing time.”	
			Homeroom Teacher G-02: “Simple habituations, such as praying before studying and getting used to greeting, turn out to have a significant influence on students’ daily attitudes.”	
3	Students’ Attitude Changes & Discipline	Reduced tardiness Decreased violations of school rules Active participation in religious and extracurricular activities	Student S-06: “Activities such as congregational prayer make us more disciplined and careful in our behavior.” Student S-10: “After several months, I have become more responsible in	“The observable conduct of students serves as a key indicator of the internalization of moral values (al-Bantani, 2007: 61).”

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of noble
character."

Based on the research findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the implementation of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education at SMK Yanisba Pontang has been effective and systematic. The findings indicate that the formation of students' noble character occurs through the synergy of teacher role-modeling (*uswah hasanah*) and habituation (*tadrib al-nafs*), supported by supervision and routine school activities.

Teacher Role-Modeling

Interview results reveal that teachers act as role models (*uswah hasanah*) for students in their daily lives. Students imitate the teachers' behavior regarding discipline, politeness, and responsibility. This aligns with the perspective of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani in *Nashaih al-'Ibad*, which emphasizes the importance of teachers as exemplars in moral education, since morality is not only taught verbally but must also be demonstrated in practice. This is evident from student S-02's statement:

"Now I have become more accustomed to greeting and being polite, because the teachers here always set the example first."

Teacher G-01 further emphasized:

"We do not only deliver the material, but also strive to be role models. For example, teachers always join congregational prayer so that students can directly see the importance of consistency."

The implementation of teacher role-modeling has proven effective in motivating students to adopt positive behaviors, thereby allowing noble values to be internalized naturally.

Habituation

Findings from observation and documentation show that routine activities such as congregational prayer, religious study sessions, and greeting practices serve as forms of *tadrīb al-naḥs* (self-training) to habituate moral behavior. This principle aligns with Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's teaching in *Nashaih al-'Ibad*, which states that moral character is formed through the repetition of good behavior until it becomes an ingrained disposition.

Student S-04 stated:

"In class, we are used to not interrupting and always respecting the teacher. Over time, this has become a habit, even outside the classroom."

Homeroom teacher G-02 added:

"Simple habituations, such as praying before lessons and getting used to greeting, turn out to have a significant influence on students' daily attitudes."

These routines not only strengthen discipline but also foster consistent moral awareness in daily behavior.

Changes in Attitudes and Student Discipline

Documentation shows a decrease in rule violations, reduced tardiness, and increased student participation in religious and extracurricular activities. This confirms that the combination of role-modeling and habituation is effective in shaping students' noble character. In line with Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's principles in *Nashaih al-'Ibad*, noble character must be manifested in real actions, not merely theoretical understanding.

Student S-06 stated:

"Activities such as congregational prayer make us more disciplined and careful in our behavior."

Student S-10 added:

"After several months, I have become more responsible in doing assignments and respecting my friends."

The principal affirmed:

"We have observed real improvements in students' discipline records and participation, which indicates the effective internalization of noble character."

Synergy between Role-Modeling and Habituation

Integrative analysis shows that teacher role-modeling and routine habituation complement each other. Teachers provide tangible examples for students to emulate, while habituation strengthens the internalization of moral values until they become stable behaviors. This synergy ensures that moral education at SMK Yanisba Pontang is not only cognitive but also practical and systematic, consistent with the principles of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education in *Nashaih al-'Ibad*.

Overall, the findings confirm that the implementation of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education at SMK Yanisba Pontang has successfully shaped students' noble character, with consistent improvements in discipline, responsibility, politeness, and mutual respect.

First, the aspect of discipline demonstrated by reduced tardiness and increased adherence to school regulations represents the implementation of *riyāḍah al-naḥs* (soul training) as emphasized by Syekh Nawawi. In *Nashaih al-*

Ibad, he asserted: “*Man jadda wajada, wa man zara’a hasada*” (whoever strives will succeed, and whoever plants goodness will reap its fruits). This indicates that students’ disciplinary changes are not instant results, but rather the fruits of consistent habituation.

Second, politeness emerged as an important theme through students’ habits of greeting, using courteous language, and respecting teachers as well as peers. In *Tafsir Munir*, when interpreting QS. Al-Qalam [68]:4, Syekh Nawawi emphasized the importance of noble character as the essence of Prophet Muhammad’s personality. This finding confirms that students’ courteous practices at school represent the actualization of *husn al-khuluq* values taught by Syekh Nawawi, showing that moral education does not stop at theory but is manifested in daily actions.

Third, students’ responsibility in completing tasks and taking initiative without being told reflects the concept of *amanah*. In *Nashaih al-’Ibad*, Syekh Nawawi wrote: “*Lā imāna liman lā amānata lah*” (faith is not complete for one who has no trustworthiness). This behavioral change affirms that the internalization of responsibility values has begun to take root, making students obedient not merely because of rules, but also due to spiritual and moral awareness.

Fourth, honesty became a central value identified in this study. Students preferred leaving exam answers blank rather than cheating, *a behavior reflecting the value of ṣidq (honesty)*, as emphasized by Syekh Nawawi: “*Al-ṣidqu najātun wa al-kadhibu halākun*” (honesty is salvation, while lying is destruction). This finding demonstrates that the inculcated moral education has influenced students’ integrity in both academic and social contexts.

Thus, this study confirms that Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani’s concept of moral education can be effectively implemented in formal education at the vocational secondary school level. The findings also show that the formation of noble character does not rely solely on cognitive teaching but more on teacher role-modeling, habituation of good behavior, and continuous supervision. This aligns with Syekh Nawawi’s view that moral education must touch knowledge, feelings, and actions holistically.

Relation to Theory

Teacher Role-Modeling and the Theory of Uswah Hasanah

The findings show that teachers serve as role models in discipline, politeness, and responsibility. Students imitate teachers’ behaviors, such as greeting and participating in congregational prayer. This corresponds to Albert Bandura’s *Social Learning Theory* (1977), which states that humans learn through processes of observation and imitation. Bandura asserted: “Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed” (Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, 1977, p. 22).

In Islamic tradition, al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of teachers as role models: “A student depends on his teacher, both in words and actions. Therefore, a teacher must be careful, because every action will be imitated by the student” (*Ihya’ Ulumuddin*, vol. 1, p. 53). Thus, teacher role-modeling at SMK

Yanisba reflects the theory of *uswah hasanah*, where noble character is instilled not only through verbal instruction but through real practices demonstrated by teachers.

Habituation and the Theory of *Tadrib al-Nafs*

Observations reveal that routine activities such as congregational prayer, collective supplication, and greeting serve as consistent moral training. This aligns with Miskawaih's perspective in *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, which affirms that character can be formed through habituation: "Morality is a state of the soul that prompts actions without the need for thought or deliberation. It can be acquired by habituating oneself to good deeds until they become a permanent disposition" (Miskawaih, *Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, p. 35).

Modern theory also supports this. Lickona (1991) identifies moral habituation as the key to character education: "Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good – habits of the mind, heart, and action" (*Educating for Character*, p. 51). Thus, habituation at SMK Yanisba strengthens the internalization of morals through the process of *tadrib al-nafs* (*soul training*).

Changes in Student Attitudes and Discipline in the Perspective of *Riyadhah al-Nafs*

The decrease in school rule violations and improvement in discipline reflects the success of consistent moral training. This is consistent with al-Ghazali's concept of *riyadhah al-nafs*, which states: "Good character is acquired by training the soul (*riyadhah*) and habituating oneself to righteous deeds continuously" (*Ihya' Ulumuddin*, vol. 3, p. 71).

Thus, the improved discipline of students at SMK Yanisba is the result of sustained soul training. This process affirms that character is not formed instantly, but through consistent self-regulation.

Internalization of Politeness and the Theory of *Husn al-Khuluq*

The findings show that students have become accustomed to respecting teachers, using polite language, and observing proper etiquette in interactions. According to Miskawaih, noble character is: "A state of the soul that facilitates good actions with ease and without lengthy deliberation" (*Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, p. 29). In other words, the politeness practiced by students reflects the internalization of *husn al-khuluq*.

This also aligns with Syekh Nawawi's interpretation of QS. *Al-Qalam* [68]:4 concerning the character of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and is supported by Lickona (1991), who emphasized that respect is central to character education. Thus, students' politeness at SMK Yanisba represents the synthesis of Islamic habituation and modern character education theory.

Responsibility as an Actualization of the Theory of Amanah

Students demonstrated responsibility in completing tasks and maintaining trust. This aligns with al-Ghazali's teaching: "A person's faith is not complete until he fulfills his trust and avoids betrayal" (*Ihya' Ulumuddin*, vol. 2, p. 221).

In modern educational theory, Lickona (1991) also stresses responsibility as a core value of character: "Responsibility is the character to meet one's obligations to self and others" (*Educating for Character*, p. 43). Thus, the practice of amanah by students demonstrates the connection between classical Islamic moral concepts and contemporary character education theory.

Honesty (Sidq) and the Theory of Moral Integrity

Students chose honesty during exams rather than cheating. This corresponds with Miskawaih's assertion: "Honesty is the root of all goodness, and falsehood is the root of all evil" (*Tahdzib al-Akhlak*, p. 40).

Similarly, Lickona (1991) emphasized that moral integrity is rooted in honesty: "Honesty is the foundation of trust, and trust is essential for human relationships and society to function" (*Educating for Character*, p. 52). This finding confirms that the value of *ṣidq* taught in Islam can be internalized through moral education practices in schools.

Synergy between *Role-Modeling* and *Habituation* in the Framework of Moral Education

Analysis shows that teacher *role-modeling* and routine *habituation* complement one another. Teachers provide tangible examples, while habituation strengthens internalization until it becomes a stable character. Al-Ghazali emphasized: "Moral education must touch three aspects: knowledge, practice, and habituation" (*Ihya' Ulumuddin*, vol. 3, p. 75).

Thus, moral education at SMK Yanisba aligns with the theories of both classical scholars and modern educational experts. This synergy demonstrates that the formation of noble character requires the integration of knowledge, role-modeling, training, and habituation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's model of moral education, when implemented at SMK Yanisba Pontang, has proven effective in shaping students' moral and spiritual character. The implementation of this model is carried out through teacher role-modeling (*uswah hasanah*) and behavioral habituation (*tadrib al-nafs*) in various routine school activities, such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic study, the practice of greeting, and adherence to classroom rules. The synergy between role-modeling and habituation not only fosters moral awareness but also produces tangible changes in students' attitudes and behavior, including discipline, responsibility, politeness, and mutual respect.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the understanding of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's principles of moral education, particularly the concepts of *uswah hasanah* (teachers as role models) and *tadrib al-nafs* (self-training through

habituation). The findings demonstrate that the internalization of morality cannot rely solely on verbal instruction but requires practical application and consistent repetition of behavior, thereby offering a new contribution to the literature on moral education in the context of vocational schools.

Practically, this research provides implications for educational practice in vocational schools, namely: (1) Teachers need to serve as real role models for students in moral and spiritual behavior. (2) Schools should design routine activities that support the habituation of moral conduct, so that moral values become an integral part of students' daily lives. (3) The integration of role-modeling and habituation can serve as an effective strategy to form noble character, not merely cognitive understanding.

Thus, the application of Syekh Nawawi's model of moral education at SMK Yanisba Pontang not only equips students with academic competence but also nurtures a strong moral and spiritual character, which is highly relevant in facing future social and professional challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the leaders, teachers, and students of SMK Yanisba Pontang, Serang Regency, as well as to the advisors and colleagues for their valuable guidance and feedback.

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