

Analysis of Psychological Factors and Strategies for Building Religious Character in Overcoming Deviant Behavior among Sixth Grade Students at SDIT Darunnajah

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze psychological factors contributing to deviant behavior among sixth-grade elementary students and to examine religious character development strategies implemented by schools to address such behavior, with the goal of identifying effective and sustainable approaches for guiding students toward positive behavioral and character development. The research employed a qualitative case study design using purposive sampling, with data collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation studies involving school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification procedures. The findings reveal that students' deviant behaviors are influenced by emotional pressure, family relationship issues, the need for peer recognition, weak emotional regulation, and exposure to digital media, while strategies such as empathetic communication, teacher role modeling, structured worship habituation, personal mentoring, and collaboration between school and parents effectively reduce behavioral problems and improve students' discipline and self-control. The study results can be applied in elementary education settings, character education programs, counseling services, and school management practices, providing practical guidance for teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents in developing preventive and corrective strategies for student behavioral issues while strengthening character education programs. The originality of this study lies in its integrated analysis combining psychological factors and religious character development strategies, demonstrating how spiritual habituation, empathetic guidance, and parental involvement collectively support behavioral improvement, thereby contributing new practical insights for advancing character education and student behavior management research in elementary school contexts.

Keywords: *Behavior, Psychological, Education, Elementary, Character*

A. Introduction

Elementary schools play a strategic role in shaping students' character and social behavior, as children at this stage are in a critical period of development that strongly influences the formation of attitudes, values, and life habits (Hasanova, 2025). Education does not merely function to develop academic abilities, but also to build character and behavior aligned with social norms and moral values (Purwaningsih & Ridha, 2024). However, developments in the modern era present new challenges for elementary education, particularly in relation to children's moral and behavioral development, which

is influenced by social change, technological advancement, and the dynamics of family and peer environments. These conditions have led to the emergence of various forms of deviant behavior even at the elementary school level, behaviors that were previously more commonly associated with adolescents.

In the elementary school environment, student deviant behavior has become increasingly diverse, including truancy, violations of school discipline, bullying among peers, and non-compliance with religious activities that have become part of school programs. Such behaviors not only disrupt the learning process but also affect students' academic and social development. If not addressed early, deviant behavior may develop into more serious habits at higher levels of education. Therefore, early intervention at the elementary level is crucial so that students' character development can be directed in a positive manner (Ginting, 2024).

Deviant behavior among students does not arise suddenly but is influenced by various factors, particularly psychological factors (Mulyukov & Ibragimov, 2021). Students' emotional conditions play an important role in shaping daily behavior (Rizwan et al., 2024). Children experiencing emotional pressure, lack of attention, or difficulty managing their feelings often express these conditions through behaviors that do not conform to established rules. In addition, children's need for recognition, attention, and social acceptance can also encourage certain behaviors, including deviant actions (Fakhirah & Machdum, 2026). Weak emotional control and limited self-regulation abilities at certain developmental stages make students more vulnerable to environmental influences (Heinze et al., 2025). Family conditions and peer environments also contribute significantly to children's behavioral formation through parenting patterns, family communication, and social interactions with peers.

In the context of integrated Islamic schools, the development of religious character becomes an important approach in shaping positive student behavior (Hadi et al., 2025). Religious character education emphasizes not only religious knowledge but also the habituation of spiritual values reflected in daily attitudes and actions (Nursobah et al., 2025). Religious values can strengthen students' self-control, help them distinguish between right and wrong behaviors, and foster noble character (Luthfi et al., 2025). Therefore, schools play an important role in instilling habits of worship, discipline, and socially responsible behavior based on religious values through structured character-building programs.

Efforts to develop religious character in addressing deviant behavior require appropriate and sustainable strategies (Harahap, 2024). An empathetic approach through interpersonal communication between teachers and students is essential so that students feel understood and guided rather than merely punished (Tung et al., 2026). Teacher role modeling, or *uswah hasanah*, is also a key factor, as students tend to imitate behaviors they observe daily at school (Hasibuan, 2025). In addition, structured worship activities, personal guidance, and active cooperation between schools and parents are important strategies in shaping consistent student behavior both at school and at home. However, there is a significant research gap in studies that specifically integrate psychological internal dynamics with religious character-building strategies as a unified solution to address elementary-level deviance. This study fills that gap by examining how psychological insights can inform more effective religious character interventions

This research takes place at SDIT Darunnajah, which presents a unique and relevant context. As an Integrated Islamic School with a rigorous curriculum, SDIT Darunnajah faces a specific paradox: despite having a highly structured religious environment, students still exhibit diverse psychological-based deviant behaviors. This setting provides a "living laboratory" to observe how traditional religious habituation interacts with the modern psychological pressures faced by urban elementary students.

Based on these conditions, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do psychological factors influence student deviant behavior at SDIT Darunnajah, and how can religious character development strategies be effectively integrated to address these issues? This research aims to analyze the underlying psychological drivers of student deviance and evaluate the implementation of religious character building as a strategic intervention. Specifically, this study is conducted to formulate a comprehensive and operational model of religious character education that is psychologically grounded to mitigate deviant behavior in the elementary school environment.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, specifically an instrumental case study. This type was chosen because the case of SDIT Darunnajah serves as a vehicle to gain a broader understanding of how psychological dynamics and religious character education interact to mitigate student deviance. A qualitative approach enables researchers to explore meanings, experiences, and character-building processes that occur naturally and contextually (Sugiyono, 2023). The research was conducted from March to June 2025 at SDIT Darunnajah, focusing on sixth-grade students.

Research Subjects and Informants The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling. Primary informants include the school principal, sixth-grade homeroom teachers, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, and guidance and counseling (BK) teachers. Additionally, several students exhibiting deviant behavior and those participating in character programs were interviewed. Parents served as supporting informants to provide data on family psychological environments.

Research Instruments To ensure structured data collection, the researcher acted as the primary instrument supported by:

1. Interview Guide: A semi-structured guide focusing on three core themes: (1) manifestations of deviant behavior, (2) perceived psychological triggers (emotional regulation, need for attention), and (3) the implementation of religious strategies.
2. Observation Sheets: A checklist and field note format used to record students' behavioral patterns during classroom learning, congregational prayers, and recess.
3. Documentation Checklist: A guide to verify school disciplinary records, religious activity reports, and character-building modules.

Data Validity To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher applied:

1. Triangulation of Sources: Comparing information obtained from teachers, students, and parents to find points of convergence.
2. Triangulation of Techniques: Correlating data from interviews with direct observations and existing school documentation.
3. Member Checking: Returning the interview transcripts or summary findings to the informants (teachers and principal) to verify that the interpretations accurately reflect their perspectives.

Data Analysis Procedure Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, implemented through a systematic coding process:

1. Data Reduction: Raw data from field notes and transcripts were transcribed and selected. The researcher performed open coding to identify keywords related to "psychological factors" and "religious intervention."
2. Data Display: Coded data were organized into thematic categories (e.g., emotional instability, teacher role modeling, spiritual habituation). These categories were then presented in narrative matrices to visualize the relationship between psychological triggers and school responses.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The researcher identified patterns and consistency across the data. These initial conclusions were continuously verified against the field data and theoretical frameworks to ensure that the final findings regarding the integration of psychological-religious strategies are robust and valid (Miles, M., & Huberman, 2014).

C. Results and Discussion

Result

Psychological Factors Contributing to Students' Deviant Behavior

The findings indicate that deviant behaviors among sixth-grade students at SDIT Darunnajah do not occur randomly but are closely related to various psychological and environmental factors influencing students' emotional and social development. Forms of deviant behavior observed include truancy, refusal to participate in congregational prayers, classroom disruptions, bullying, and violations of school discipline. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation show that these behaviors are strongly associated with emotional and social conditions experienced by students both at school and at home.

Emotional Pressure and Family Relationships

The study reveals that several students exhibiting deviant behavior tend to experience emotional instability, such as easily becoming offended, withdrawing from social interactions, or reacting emotionally when corrected by teachers. Interviews with teachers and parents indicate that such emotional conditions are often linked to limited parental attention due to work commitments, family conflicts, or excessive academic demands placed on children.

Students experiencing emotional stress often express their frustration through resistance toward school rules or through disruptive behavior toward peers. This finding confirms that emotional security within the family environment plays an essential role in shaping

children's behavior. When emotional needs are unmet, children tend to seek attention through negative behaviors.

Need for Social Recognition

The research also finds that students at the upper elementary level have a strong need for recognition and acceptance among peers. Several teachers reported that some students intentionally engage in disruptive or rule-breaking behavior to gain attention or to appear dominant within peer groups. Observation results indicate that when positive appreciation is lacking, students tend to seek recognition through negative actions. This suggests that peer acceptance significantly influences students' behavioral choices. Therefore, positive reinforcement and appreciation from teachers and peers become essential components in preventing deviant behavior.

Weak Emotional Regulation and Self-Control

Another important factor identified is students' limited ability to regulate emotions and control impulses. Some students show difficulty managing anger, disappointment, or frustration, which leads to aggressive behavior, rule violations, or conflicts with peers. These findings align with character education theory, which emphasizes that self-regulation is fundamental in moral and character development. Students who lack emotional control tend to react impulsively without considering consequences. Hence, strengthening emotional regulation skills becomes crucial in character-building efforts at the elementary level.

Influence of Environment and Digital Media

The study also reveals that external environments, including peer influence and digital media exposure, contribute significantly to students' behavior. Several teachers noted that students often imitate behaviors they observe through online games, social media, or digital content without adequate parental supervision. According to ecological development theory, children's behavior is shaped by interactions within multiple environments, including family, school, peers, and media exposure. Without proper guidance, students may adopt inappropriate behaviors that contradict school values and discipline standards.

Strategies for Religious Character Development in Addressing Deviant Behavior

The research findings demonstrate that SDIT Darunnajah implements various religious character development strategies to address deviant behavior among students. These strategies emphasize moral guidance, spiritual habituation, and emotional support rather than punishment alone.

Empathetic Approach and Spiritual Dialogue

Teachers apply an empathetic approach by communicating personally with students who exhibit behavioral problems. Rather than immediately imposing punishment, teachers first attempt to understand students' emotional conditions and personal challenges. Through reflective dialogue and spiritual guidance, teachers connect behavioral correction with Islamic values, encouraging students to reflect on their actions and develop personal awareness. This approach makes students feel understood and supported, thereby increasing their willingness to improve behavior.

Teacher Role Modeling (*Uswah Hasanah*)

Teacher behavior plays a central role in shaping students' character. Observations show that teachers consistently demonstrate discipline, patience, politeness, and commitment to worship practices. Students tend to imitate behaviors they observe daily, making teachers powerful role models in developing religious and social conduct. Consistent role modeling helps students internalize values not merely as rules but as everyday practices demonstrated by adults they respect.

Structured Religious Habituation Programs

The school implements structured religious programs, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation and memorization activities, morning remembrance (dzikr), and short religious lectures. These activities are designed to build spiritual awareness and discipline through routine practice. Repeated engagement in meaningful religious activities gradually shapes students' attitudes and self-control. Teachers reported observable improvements in student discipline and cooperation after regular participation in these activities.

Personal Mentoring and Counseling

Students experiencing behavioral problems receive personal mentoring from teachers. Guidance sessions combine psychological support with spiritual reflection, encouraging students to evaluate their actions and develop self-improvement plans. This individualized approach allows teachers to address students' personal challenges more effectively while strengthening emotional bonds between students and educators.

Collaboration Between School and Parents

The study also highlights the importance of collaboration between school and parents. Communication regarding students' behavior is maintained through meetings, counseling sessions, and informal discussions. Such cooperation ensures consistency in guidance between home and school environments. When parents actively participate in reinforcing positive behavior at home, improvements in student discipline and emotional stability become more sustainable.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that deviant behavior among sixth-grade students at SDIT Darunnajah is not an isolated phenomenon but is influenced by the interaction of various psychological, social, and environmental factors. These findings reinforce the view that student behavior at the elementary school level is the result of ongoing emotional and social development processes, making it highly influenced by the closest environments, particularly family, school, peer interactions, and digital media exposure.

Findings related to emotional pressure and family relationships show that students' psychological conditions are closely linked to the home environment and family communication patterns (Liu, 2025). When students experience a lack of attention, family conflict, or excessive academic demands, they tend to express emotional pressure through deviant behavior at school (Jiang & Gao, 2022). This confirms that schools are not merely dealing with disciplinary issues but also with students' emotional conditions shaped by their family environment. Therefore, approaches emphasizing an understanding of students' psychological conditions are crucial in addressing deviant behavior.

The addition, students' need for social recognition also plays an important role in the emergence of deviant behavior. At the upper elementary level, students begin to develop a strong need to be accepted by their peer groups. When this need is not met positively, some students seek attention through rule-breaking or disruptive actions (Rino & Setiawan, 2025). This finding suggests that deviant behavior often reflects a search for identity and social acceptance. Therefore, character-building strategies should include positive appreciation and the creation of classroom environments that support healthy social acceptance.

Weak emotional regulation and self-control also emerged as significant factors in this study (Chen et al., 2026). Many students are not yet able to manage negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, or frustration constructively, leading them to react impulsively. This condition shows that character education is not only about instilling moral values but also about strengthening emotional skills and self-control. Religious character development programs implemented by the school become relevant because spiritual values can help students develop self-awareness and behavioral control (Alfarezel, 2025).

The influence of the external environment and digital media further complicates student behavioral issues. Exposure to digital content without parental supervision makes students more likely to imitate behaviors that conflict with school norms (Nofianti & Widya, 2026). Peer pressure also influences students' behavioral choices (Chávez et al., 2025). These findings indicate that character-building challenges in the digital era are increasingly complex, making collaboration between schools and families essential in guiding children's digital media use. On the other hand, this study also shows that religious character development strategies implemented by the school play a significant role in reducing students' deviant behavior. The empathetic approach applied by teachers proves effective because students feel heard and understood rather than merely punished (Rijal, 2025). When teachers build personal communication and link behavioral solutions to religious values, students more readily accept guidance and become consciously motivated to improve themselves.

Teacher role modeling also proves to be an important factor in shaping student character (Maulana & Wijaya, 2025). Students tend to imitate behaviors they consistently observe in daily school life. Therefore, teachers' demonstrations of discipline, patience, and consistency in worship practices provide concrete examples of the expected religious behavior. Structured worship habituation programs also contribute to the development of students' discipline and self-control (City, 2025). Routine religious activities help build spiritual awareness while fostering positive habits (Farhan, 2025). Gradually, these practices cultivate discipline, responsibility, and a sense of togetherness among students. Personal mentoring for students experiencing behavioral problems also shows high effectiveness, as individual approaches allow teachers to understand students' problems more deeply.

Through personal guidance that combines psychological and spiritual approaches, students become more open in expressing their difficulties and more motivated to change their behavior. Furthermore, cooperation between schools and parents becomes an important factor in sustaining students' behavioral improvements (Ximenes, 2025). When parents are actively involved in character development at home, behavioral changes

achieved at school can be maintained consistently. This demonstrates that character development cannot be carried out solely by schools but requires support from the family environment.

Overall, this study shows that deviant behavior among students can be minimized through a comprehensive approach that includes understanding underlying psychological factors and implementing systematic and sustainable religious character development strategies. These findings affirm that effective character education requires a combination of psychological approaches, role modeling, habituation of religious values, and cooperation between schools and families. Through such an approach, schools not only address behavioral problems but also build stronger character foundations for students' future development.

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that the deviant behavior of sixth-grade students at SDIT Darunnajah is triggered by complex internal psychological factors, particularly weak emotional regulation and an unmet need for social recognition. These conditions are frequently exacerbated by pressures from family dynamics and the influence of digital media. The findings indicate that the most effective religious character development strategies for mitigating these issues are approaches that prioritize empathetic communication and teacher role modeling (*uswah hasanah*). By integrating structured spiritual habituation with personal mentoring, the school is able to transform religious values from mere rote memorization into a concrete self-control mechanism for students.

The main synthesis of this research asserts that deviant behavior at the elementary school level is a manifestation of the students' psychological state; therefore, its management cannot rely solely on punitive measures. The most successful intervention model is a holistic-integrative approach that aligns psychological understanding with the internalization of spiritual values. In this model, religious activities function as emotional regulation tools that help students develop moral awareness and psychological resilience against negative environmental influences.

Practically, teachers are advised to shift from conventional disciplinary approaches to an empathetic mentoring model that prioritizes active listening to students' emotional concerns. Schools should design a character curriculum that explicitly links religious practices to psychological benefits, such as cultivating patience and self-discipline. Furthermore, parents are expected to enhance the consistency of character values at home to ensure alignment with school programs. For future research, longitudinal studies are recommended to monitor the long-term effectiveness of these strategies as students transition into adolescence, alongside comparative studies across various school models to broaden the perspective on the influence of school culture on students' psychological resilience.

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