

Strengthening Student Character Through *Tapak Suci* Extracurricular Activities

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ABSTRACT

Character education is essential in shaping students' personalities by instilling values such as honesty, discipline, creativity, responsibility, hard work, and religiosity from an early age through habituation and role models. It must be implemented across formal, informal, and non-formal education to address the moral crisis in society. This study explores the strengthening of religious character through Tapak Suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo. The objectives are to identify religious values in Tapak Suci activities, examine the process of character strengthening, and evaluate their impact on students. Using a qualitative descriptive field method with a phenomenological approach, data were gathered through triangulation direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed inductively through reduction, presentation, and verification. The results show that Tapak Suci instills responsibility, manners, discipline, faith, honesty, piety, and leadership. The strengthening process includes holistic training, personal mentoring, routine practice infused with religious values like mutual respect, patience, rule obedience, worship, prayer, study, organizational involvement, and regular evaluation. The impact includes improved worship discipline, strengthened morals, enhanced Islamic character, and academic and non-academic achievements. This study concludes that Tapak Suci effectively builds students' religious and moral integrity, shaping them into responsible individuals who contribute positively to society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world of education continues to face new problems in delivering to each student the ability to become successful. Education is insufficient to stop at cognitive or academic routines that can

produce graduates as workers or scientists with high cognitive intelligence but shallow personalities (Setiawan, 2020). The digital era dramatically influences students' character; besides making it easier to get information and learn, negative impacts will be felt if it is not balanced with character strengthening in students (Krisdaniastutik & Hadi, 2017).

Character education plays an important role in the digital era, where information is easily accessible, aiming to teach honesty, discipline, creativity, responsibility, hard work, and religiosity at the beginning of everyday life through habituation and examples (Oktafiani, 2021). Integrating Islamic values into education is very important to improve the quality of education, foster moral responsibility, and improve student character, which ultimately leads to a more comprehensive and morally honest society.

In several research arenas, religiosity can be known from how far the knowledge, belief, implementation and appreciation of Islam. According to Joharsah Muhlizar, the religious character is an attitude and behaviour that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion one adheres to, tolerant of the implementation of other religious worship, and living in harmony with adherents of other religions (Joharsah & Muhlizar, 2023). According to Lety Febriana and Amnah Qurniati, religiosity is the appreciation and deepening of Islamic principles that a person believes in the form of commitment and awareness, which can then be applied in daily activities (Febriana, Lexy, 2021). Implementing character education through formal, informal and non-formal education is very important to foster positive personalities in students and combat the common moral crisis in society (Nelliraharti et al., 2023). The purpose of character education is more than just modifying behaviour; it is intended to unlock students' full potential and focus on the importance of selecting good and bad characters (Marzuqi, 2022). To achieve the desired individual development through character education, it is important to increase the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education to realize the principles of religious teachings among students. Thus, habituation is needed in daily activities (Santika & Ikhwan, 2024).

Character strengthening is a process to develop, strengthen, and affirm good moral values and qualities in an individual. Character strengthening aims to form a strong, quality, and moral personality. This process involves developing positive attitudes, behaviours, and habits that lead to harmony between individuals, society, and religion (Suryanti & Widayanti, 2018; Al Jamil, 2017).

Strengthening the character of students can be carried out through extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities as a student development program aim to develop the quality of education and increase the potential of students to gain knowledge and experience through extracurricular activities. Students are expected to gain skills and improve their talents through extracurricular programs. In extracurricular activities, students can improve their expertise. Character education based on self-potential is a program that consciously and systematically guides students in overcoming and improving their abilities through emancipation and reasoning (Rona Rofidah Salma, 2022).

Pencak silat extracurricular activities as activities outside of school hours aim to increase knowledge, guide student interests, and encourage student progress in art, sports, self-development and other positive goals. The extracurricular program aims to improve students' talents, personalities, achievements and creativity (Lia Aprilia, Dadang Mulyana, 2023). Moreover, this activity also has spiritual guidance as the primary learning. The trainer directly observes, guides and carries out the process so students can be observed from their character. Self-control character or ethical skills (Deril Sukma & Dyah, 2020). Kriswanto emphasized that *pencak silat* has an important mental and spiritual dimension. *Tapak suci* teaches self-defence techniques and develops attitudes such as piety to God, honesty, discipline, and high responsibility (Kriswanto, 2015). Alfa Nifta Ilfana also stated that *tapak suci* teaches knowledge based on the physical and spiritual, including character that includes faith and

piety based on the Qur'an and As-Sunnah (Ilma Nifta Ilfana, 2018). In addition to physical and mental aspects, religious character is instilled through *tapak suci* extracurricular activities. Research conducted by Undiana Putri Rahayu stated that the institution strongly supports *tapak suci* activities. Examples of the character of students who participate in extracurricular activities are those who did not worship much before the training, changed to worshipping more often, students who have little empathy can become someone who likes to help others, tolerance and discipline, besides the religious character of *tapak suci* is also embedded and implemented in the daily lives of students (Rahayu, 2023).

The process of strengthening character through *tapak suci* is carried out through routine religious programs created by members and their organizations and carried out according to regulations, as research by Albar et al. states that the instillation of peaceful Islamic character values is displayed in the form of traditions such as praying to open and close training, saying the school's motto, reading the shahada sentence, and praying in congregation (Albar et al., 2019).

SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is one of the formal schools that emphasizes character education through extracurricular activities. This institution has achieved the status of a National Standard School (NSS) with A accreditation, which shows a strong commitment to internalizing commendable values in education. Character education is implemented through various programs, including the *tapak suci* extracurricular. The background of *tapak suci* is to strengthen the character of students. In addition, *tapak suci* also functions as a place to improve the abilities and potential of students in the field of *pencak silat*. The primary purpose of *Tapak suci* is to strengthen students' morals and discipline. This activity teaches mental, physical, and spiritual aspects applied in training.

2. METHODS

The research conducted is a qualitative field research or field research that is descriptive and non-statistical. This study uses a field research approach using phenomenological methods. This study analyzed data using qualitative descriptive results based on interview findings and accurate observations, not in the form of numbers. According to Miles and Huberman, the qualitative data analysis model includes three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and verification (Moleong.L.J, 2017). Data analysis is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Ikhwan, 2020). This study uses triangulation techniques with sources. That is, exploring the truth of certain information by checking data obtained from various sources. Data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentation. The object of the research is to examine *tapak suci* coaches and trainers. The author collected data from two sources in this study. The data sources surveyed are subject to the data collection process. The primary data sources for this study were the principal, the teacher in charge, trainers, administrators and students of *tapak suci* SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo. In this study, secondary data from documents, photos, and field surveys are secondary sources.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Religious character instilled through the *tapak suci* extracurricular.

The Tapak Suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo do not merely function as physical martial arts training. Rather, they serve as a holistic character education program that embeds religious and moral values into the physical, mental, and spiritual development of students. The following are the core character values observed and how they are cultivated, along with insights from interviews conducted with various stakeholders.

Responsibility, The value of responsibility is deeply embedded in Tapak Suci activities through the delegation of tasks and daily routines, " *Each Tapak Suci member is given the responsibility to maintain training equipment such as mats and uniforms. They are also responsible for the cleanliness and readiness of the training area,*" (Interview with Tapak Suci Coach). This practice teaches students to be accountable and dependable, developing a habit of taking care of collective resources and carrying out assigned duties conscientiously. Discipline, Discipline is instilled by enforcing rules related to time management, consistency, and ritualistic behavior such as praying before and after sessions. " *We always emphasize the importance of being on time. "If someone is late, they should politely ask permission and explain the reason,"* (Interview with Student Coordinator). The strict adherence to prayer times also reflects how discipline is intertwined with religious observance, showing how spiritual and practical discipline are connected. Good Manners, Tapak Suci emphasizes adab (etiquette) as a core part of every training session. " *The coach emphasized that we should always be polite to seniors and friends. Speaking should be in a good tone, not rude,*" (Interview with Tapak Suci Member).

This reflects Muhammadiyah's broader educational emphasis on akhlaq (moral conduct) as the foundation of interaction within and beyond school. Faith and Piety, Religious practices are woven into every aspect of Tapak Suci. Students are encouraged to pray, read the Qur'an, and participate in Ramadan-specific programs. " *Every practice we start with prayer, and during Ramadan we have tadarus together. We also make a program for breaking the fast and studying,*" (Interview with Tapak Suci Organizational Leader), and the last Honesty, Honesty is emphasized in the context of training reports, attendance, and communication with trainers. " *If we can't attend training, we have to honestly explain the reason. We can't lie, because honesty is part of mental training,*" (Interview with Student Participant). This practice cultivates integrity and fosters a culture of transparency and personal accountability among members.

Based on the findings and interviews, it is evident that the Tapak Suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo go far beyond the realm of physical martial arts training. They function as a comprehensive character-building platform that integrates religious and moral education into students' daily experiences. Through structured routines and consistent mentorship, students internalize core values such as responsibility, discipline, good manners, faith, piety, and honesty. These values are not only taught but practiced and reinforced through real-life application, as seen in their duties, behavior, spiritual practices, and interpersonal interactions. The insights from coaches, student leaders, and participants affirm that Tapak Suci serves as an effective medium for shaping individuals who are not only physically resilient but also morally upright, spiritually conscious, and socially responsible. This holistic approach ensures that students are prepared to become well-rounded individuals who embody Islamic values and contribute positively to their communities.

The process of strengthening religious character through *tapak suci*

The character-strengthening process in Tapak Suci at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo begins with a structured and consistent training schedule. Students undergo martial arts training twice a week, with clear time allocations and routines. This discipline creates a sense of responsibility and commitment to time management. The repeated practice not only builds physical skill but also fosters a mental habit of consistency and perseverance. According to the trainer, " *We have scheduled practice every Tuesday and Friday afternoon. This schedule should not be violated unless there is a very strong reason. This trains them to be disciplined and appreciate time.*" (Interview with Tapak Suci Coach). The consistency of the schedule ensures that students gradually develop habits of punctuality, routine, and accountability. Over time, these structured patterns influence how students manage not only training

but also academic and daily obligations, reinforcing a character that values commitment and order essential attributes in religious and moral development.

Regular Integration of Religious Rituals, Religious rituals are deeply integrated into the Tapak Suci training environment. Each session is preceded and concluded with prayers, recitation of the shahada, and reflection. These rituals serve as a spiritual anchor, reminding students that martial arts are not only about strength but also about humility and submission to God. One instructor noted, *"We always start our practice by praying and reciting the shahada. This instills the value that every activity must be based on the intention of worship."* (Interview with Tapak Suci Instructor). During special occasions such as Ramadan, additional practices like tadarus Qur'an and buka puasa bersama are conducted, reinforcing spiritual bonding among members. These routine integrations habituate students to internalize worship as part of their discipline, blurring the boundary between religious obligations and daily life. The rituals are not formalities they function as ethical reminders and formational tools, helping students build spiritual awareness and a sense of responsibility towards God and their community.

To ensure holistic learning, Tapak Suci implements a diverse set of instructional methods. Training is not confined to physical routines; it includes short lectures, group discussions, demonstrations, and simulations to instill understanding of values behind every movement and command. An instructor shared, *"I not only train their physical, but also explain the philosophy of each movement. We discuss together about the meaning of piety and honesty in pencak silat"* (Interview with Senior Trainer). Through discussions, students are encouraged to reflect on their actions and relate them to real-life moral situations. Simulations help them understand teamwork, leadership, and emotional control, while direct practice builds resilience and courage. This multimodal strategy aligns with Muhammadiyah's educational principles, aiming to integrate fikriyah (intellectual), jasadiyah (physical), and ruhiyah (spiritual) aspects. By combining these learning forms, Tapak Suci doesn't just create fighters it cultivates individuals with strong intellect, disciplined behavior, and religious conscience.

Beyond routine training, Tapak Suci organizes weekly religious and social activities that further reinforce character values. These include communal Qur'an recitation (tadarus), Islamic study sessions (kajian), and organized social services such as visiting orphanages or conducting charity drives. A student coordinator shared, *"We have a regular study program every two weeks, and there are also social service activities organized by the members themselves. This helps us learn to be responsible and care for others."* (Interview with Tapak Suci Student Leader). Such activities offer students the opportunity to apply religious values like empathy, solidarity, and humility in real-life contexts. Organizational involvement teaches leadership and communication skills while encouraging initiative and problem-solving. These non-physical components are just as vital as the martial aspect of Tapak Suci, as they nurture a social consciousness and spiritual commitment. These efforts collectively shape students into well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to their school and wider community.

A pivotal component of character development in Tapak Suci is the exemplary conduct of instructors who serve as role models. Their words, actions, and decisions reflect the values they teach—obedience, gratitude, humility, and respect. Students consistently observe and learn through imitation. One participant said, *"Our coach is very patient and never gets angry. The way he talks, gives orders, everything is full of politeness. That makes us respect him and imitate his attitude"* (Interview with Tapak Suci Member). The instructors do not merely instruct; they mentor. They personally guide students during difficult moments, offering not only correction but also moral support and encouragement. This personal approach fosters a bond of trust, making it easier for values to be transmitted authentically. The presence of such figures significantly influences students' development, making values like gratitude and obedience more than theoretical lessons—they become lived experiences. Instructor

modeling ensures character values are absorbed not only cognitively but emotionally and spiritually as well.

Implications of strengthening religious character through sacred footprints

Tapak Suci significantly enhances students' religious discipline, especially in terms of worship obedience. The integration of prayers and spiritual rituals within training sessions has habituated students to observe both obligatory and sunnah worship with greater consistency and sincerity. One student testified, *"In the past, I often postponed prayers, but since joining Tapak Suci, I have become more aware of prayer times. Before practice, we are obliged to pray, so I feel embarrassed if I don't pray outside"* (Interview with Tapak Suci Member). The training system creates a structured environment where worship becomes a part of the students' routine, not merely a school obligation. This consistency helps shape their personal commitment to Islamic rituals. Beyond the scheduled prayers, students become more enthusiastic in practicing sunnah worship such as tahajjud, dhuha, and Qur'an recitation. Tapak Suci thus operates as a spiritual incubator, embedding religious practices into students' daily habits and strengthening their awareness of religious responsibilities.

Participation in Tapak Suci has proven to reinforce students' moral qualities, particularly honesty, responsibility, and self-confidence. The training emphasizes truthfulness in attendance, discipline in obeying rules, and accountability in completing assigned duties. A Tapak Suci coach shared, *"We always remind you that it is important to be honest. We will talk to children who skip school or have false excuses so that they can learn responsibility"* (Interview with Trainer). This environment gradually cultivates students' moral integrity. They begin to develop internal motivation to act responsibly without external enforcement. Moreover, as students undergo physical and mental training, their self-confidence improves. Participating in demonstrations and performing in front of peers helps them overcome stage fright and express themselves. These moral reinforcements become evident not only during practice but in students' academic life and social interactions. Tapak Suci thus functions as a moral formation program where values are not only taught but lived and internalized.

Tapak Suci plays a critical role in shaping students' Islamic character, notably in promoting tolerance, mutual respect, and consistent religious practice. Students are taught to respect differences among peers, appreciate the values of brotherhood (ukhuwah), and help one another in and outside the training ground. A Tapak Suci organizational leader noted, *"We are taught to help each other and not to discriminate. If anyone is weak or injured during training, everyone is immediately quick to help"* (Interview with Organizational Leader). These experiences translate into real-life Islamic ethics such as ta'awun (helping one another) and tawadhu' (humility). Tapak Suci's environment fosters sincerity and mutual concern, reflecting core Muhammadiyah values. Additionally, by incorporating Qur'anic teachings into training and encouraging active religious participation, students become accustomed to Islamic values not just as theory, but as a way of life. Over time, students' behavior aligns more closely with Islamic moral standards, demonstrating the effectiveness of Tapak Suci in nurturing holistic Islamic character.

The discipline and motivation instilled in Tapak Suci positively impact students' performance in both academic and non-academic fields. Students become more focused, organized, and goal-oriented, traits that are crucial for academic success. One teacher commented, *"Children who are active in Tapak Suci are usually more diligent and have a high enthusiasm for learning. They are used to following the rules and have regular study time"* (Interview with Subject Teacher). This sense of structure often translates into improved academic outcomes. In addition, participation in pencak silat competitions provides students with opportunities to excel outside the classroom. Winning tournaments boosts their self-esteem and fosters a sense of achievement. These experiences also teach sportsmanship, resilience, and perseverance, which are transferable to academic challenges. Tapak Suci thereby not only supports

character development but also enhances students' overall performance, encouraging a balanced growth between intellectual and extracurricular competence.

Tapak Suci fosters strong community values by encouraging students to be more socially engaged, helpful, and tolerant. The extracurricular instills a sense of collective responsibility, urging members to contribute meaningfully to society. This is achieved through community service programs such as charity drives, visiting orphanages, and neighborhood clean-up events. A student explained, *"We have held mosque cleaning activities and social services to orphanages. It was an experience that opened my eyes to the importance of changingi"* (Interview with Tapak Suci Member). These initiatives build empathy and enhance students' sensitivity to others' needs. Tapak Suci teaches that martial prowess must be balanced with humility and service. Consequently, students become more active in community forums and school organizations, demonstrating leadership and care. This active engagement prepares them not only as martial artists but as future community leaders who prioritize harmony, empathy, and mutual cooperation key aspects of Islamic social ethics.

Discussion

Religious character instilled through the tapak suci extracurricular.

This study shows that the Tapak suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo focus on developing physical martial arts skills and aim to build students' character and spirituality. In line with this, in the reform era, the government has also integrated religious education into the national education system (Ikhwan, 2017). The character values developed through these activities include responsibility, good manners, discipline, faith and piety, honesty, and leadership. Responsibility is manifested through providing mandates from the trainer to students, such as maintaining and caring for training facilities. Manners are applied in every training, requiring students to speak politely and behave well to the trainer and fellow students. Discipline is taught through training regulations, punctual habits, and praying on time. Piety and faith are applied through activities such as praying, attending Sunday morning studies, reciting the Koran together during Ramadan, and carrying out religious work programs created by tapak suci students. Honesty is taught in training, such as carrying out tasks from the trainer according to the message, attendance, and training permits with the right reasons and factual circumstances.

Instilling religious character in students is an important aspect of education to form individuals with morals and noble character. SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo holds extracurricular activities in tapak suci to achieve this goal. Lestari stated that tapak suci is a pencak silat style rooted in religious values and nationalism, which teaches physical self-defence skills and instils deep spiritual and moral values in students (Lestari, 2018). According to Akmadi and Doni, the concept of "Defending Religion and Defending the Nation", the main philosophy of tapak suci, emphasizes the importance of maintaining religious values and nationalism through self-defence practices (Akhmadi & Doni., 2011). This is reflected in the efforts of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo in preserving and developing tapak suci as an integral part of character education at the school. In this context, the tapak suci extracurricular activity is a physical martial arts training and a vehicle for forming a strong and moral personality.

Kriswanto emphasized that pencak silat has an important mental and spiritual dimension. Tapak suci teaches self-defence techniques and develops attitudes such as devotion to God, honesty, discipline, and high responsibility (Kriswanto, 2015). This is in line with the character education goals carried out by SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo, which are oriented towards producing graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also have high morality by Islamic teachings. Islam prioritizes education as very important (Anwar et al., 2023).

Religious character education is carried out to guide good and evil according to students' developmental stages. Religious character education is successful if students can absorb and deepen

the values and beliefs taught. The goal is to form the nature and character of religious students by experiencing and practising what is taught in school. Based on the research results, the tapak suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo consistently incorporate religious values in every aspect of its training.

The curriculum of Islamic educational institutions based on Islamic boarding schools in Muhammadiyah is carefully designed and implemented to support the formation of ideology and student organization cadres through knowledge and involvement in Muhammadiyah programs. It is regularly evaluated to ensure optimal learning outcomes (Anwar et al., 2023). Lestari stated that the success of instilling religious character is assessed by the ability of students to internalize and apply these values in everyday life (Lestari, 2018). Students are taught to pray before and after training, demonstrating the school's commitment to deepening religious values. Tapak suci provides physical lessons and educates moral attitudes through Islamic teachings. Observations show that tapak suci coaches and instructors prioritize discipline, mutual respect, and obedience to religious teachings as an integral part of daily training and interactions in these activities.

Tapak suci teaches knowledge based on the physical and spiritual, including character that includes faith and piety based on the Qur'an and As-Sunnah (Ilma Nifta Ilfana, 2018). In addition to physical and mental aspects, the religious character instilled through the tapak suci extracurricular at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo includes faith, piety, and noble morals such as obedience to worship, discipline, honesty, responsibility, and good manners.

Character instillation in tapak suci training is expected to help students' lives in society. With the character instilled, students are expected to have good and strong character according to the objectives of the extracurricular activities. Research (Anwar, 2023) also supports that the pencak silat extracurricular teaches positive characteristics, such as discipline, responsibility, and obedience to regulations at school and the training ground. The tapak suci extracurricular program at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is a good example of how a martial arts activity can effectively build religious and moral character in students. Led by committed administrators and coaches, this program teaches martial arts techniques in the pencak silat tradition and integrates Islamic values in every aspect of training and interaction between members. In addition to developing spiritual and moral aspects, tapak suci also forms leadership and responsibility through various organizational activities and religious work programs.

Students are not only taught to become tough athletes in pencak silat competitions but are also prepared to become individuals with high integrity, honesty, discipline, and patience in facing challenges. Through their commitment to these values, students learn to become successful individuals in martial arts and positively contribute to society and the surrounding environment. Integrated educational integration requires Islamic educational values in schools to be applied comprehensively to the needs of society and families. In reality, this integration can eliminate conflicting education between the three elements, thus having implications for improving the quality of moral responsibility and student morals (Ikhwan, 2014).

Therefore, this program also provides space for students to develop a deep understanding of Islamic teachings through regular religious studies, preaching activities, and other religious work programs. They are invited to practice the moral values they learn inside and outside the tapak suci environment, creating a harmonious balance between physical and spiritual activities. Thus, tapak suci at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is a place to practice self-defence skills and form strong characters based on deep Islamic values relevant to the times' needs.

The process of strengthening religious character through tapak suci

Strengthening religious character through tapak suci extracurricular activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo involves various strategies to shape students into individuals with high integrity and morality. Furthermore, tapak suci training emphasizes spiritual aspects such as respecting tradition, appreciating the knowledge provided by instructors, and fostering a sense of gratitude for the abilities provided (Subekti et al., 2021). Tapak suci helps students develop self-discipline through consistent activities, teaching them to value time, follow procedures correctly, and be responsible for their actions. Values such as patience, responsibility, and respect are integrated into each training session, helping students understand and internalize these values daily. This is because pencak silat is the development of the character of the Indonesian nation, which includes elements of self-defence, art, sports, and spirituality that complement each other and cannot be separated (Wijaya et al., 2022). Effective school management makes extracurricular activities a means to accommodate and realize students' potential and create a fun learning environment that does not make students bored (Albar et al., 2019). The tapak suci extracurricular at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is programmed using structured and fun coaching, combining materials and students' direct experiences applying the values contained therein (Aprilia & Mulyana, 2023).

The trainer uses lecture, discussion, simulation, and direct practice methods in delivering material, providing motivation and evaluation of each exercise, in line with Rona Rofidah's statement that this method strengthens students' theoretical understanding of religious values and facilitates practical experience and deep personal reflection (Rona Rofidah Salma, 2022).

The tapak suci activities at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo are carried out twice a week and consistently by all members. The tapak suci training program ensures consistent progress (Hikam et al., 2023). The process of strengthening character through tapak suci is carried out through routine religious programs created by members and their organizations and implemented according to regulations, as research (Albar et al., 2019) shows that the instillation of peaceful Islamic character values is displayed in the form of traditions such as praying to open and close training, reciting the school's motto, reciting the shahada sentence, and praying in congregation. The tapak suci organization is a strong instrument in forming a strong religious character in students, preparing them to become moral leaders in society and implementing religious values in every aspect of life (Syamsudin & Nawir, 2016).

Tapak suci members at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo increase cooperation and foster a sense of family and responsibility through work programs created by its members, in line with Thohari's statement that tapak suci, as a martial arts organization based on Islamic values, provides opportunities for students to understand and practice religious teachings in everyday life. Individual identity is formed through membership in certain social groups with the same values and norms (Thohari, 2017).

Implications of strengthening religious character through sacred footprints

The impact of strengthening religious character through the tapak suci extracurricular at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo significantly influences the development of students' morals, spirituality, and discipline. Tapak suci has a positive impact that helps students become better individuals, have noble characters, and be useful to society. Some of the impacts that can be seen from strengthening religious character through tapak suci activities include increased obedience to worship, strengthening moral values, development of Islamic character, and increasing academic and non-academic achievement. First, increased obedience to worship can be seen in students who are more diligent in carrying out obligatory worship, such as the five daily prayers, and are more motivated to carry out sunnah worship, such as reading Al-Qur'an, praying in congregation, and dhikr. Second, strengthening

moral values is reflected in students who have a higher sense of responsibility in carrying out their duties and obligations, are more honest, disciplined, and respect others. They also show higher mentality and self-confidence, values instilled through training, coaching, and role models from mentors and seniors at tapak suci.

Third, the development of Islamic character can be seen in students who better understand and practice Islamic values daily, become more tolerant, respect each other, and help each other. This Islamic character helps students to become better and more noble individuals. Fourth, students feel an increase in achievement both academically and non-academically. The religious values, discipline, and hard work instilled at tapak suci help children succeed in various areas of life, such as winning the Tapak suci arts competition or the tapak suci pencak silat competition. The achievements achieved in these trainings and competitions also increase students' self-confidence, which helps them study and face exams. This aligns with Rahayu's research, which shows that students participating in the tapak suci extracurriculars experience increased worship, discipline, and a sense of responsibility (Rahayu, 2023).

Furthermore, Father Rachman's research confirms that tapak suci activities can foster students' self-confidence, responsibility, discipline, and other character traits. This activity also helps students realize their strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to be honest and objective (Rachman et al., 2022). In addition, tapak suci also builds students' mentality in the community, such as being polite to elders and being tolerant of other organizations (Hadiana et al., 2022). The positive impact of character strengthening through tapak suci at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is also felt in the community, where students become accustomed to solving problems, daring to make decisions, and helping each other. Tapak suci activities not only build muscular physiques and achievements in the field of pencak silat but also positively impact students, forming a strong religious character, preparing them to become moral leaders in society, and implementing religious values in every aspect of their lives.

As explained above, the development of religious character through the Tapak Suci extracurricular activities is illustrated in Figure 1.

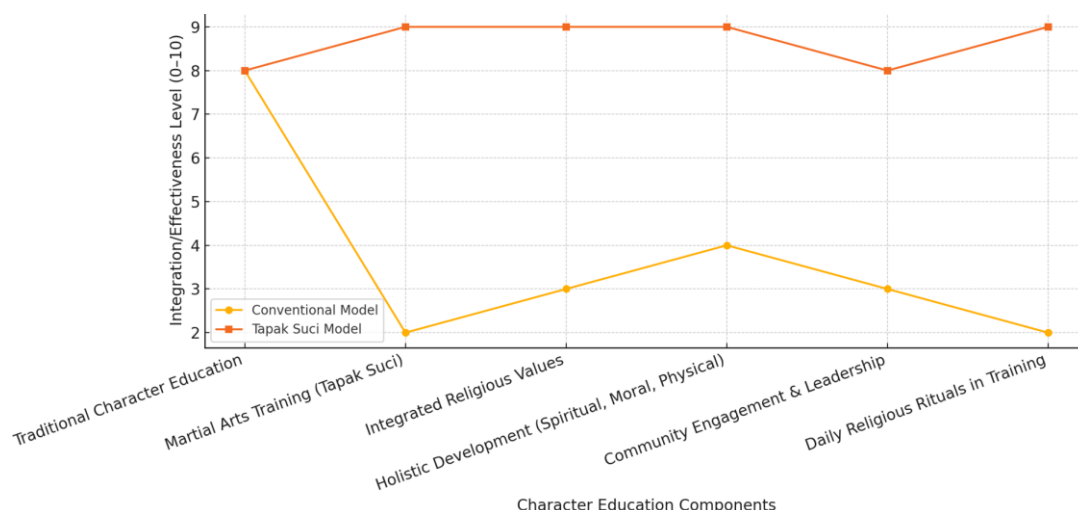


Figure 1. Development Of Religious Character Through Tapak Suci Extracurricular

This graph compares the conventional approach to character education with the Tapak Suci model across six key components. Traditional character education refers to commonly taught values in general schools, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. Martial arts training in the Tapak Suci model

serves as a medium for character formation, integrating physical discipline with ethical development. Integrated religious values are explicitly embedded in the Tapak Suci approach, including Islamic practices like prayer, etiquette (*adab*), and honesty. The model also emphasizes holistic development, nurturing students physically, spiritually, and morally. Community engagement and leadership are fostered through Islamic-based leadership training and social service activities. Lastly, daily religious rituals in training such as prayer, *tadarus*, and *dzikir* are incorporated as part of students' regular routines, reinforcing spiritual growth alongside martial arts practice. Together, these elements illustrate how the Tapak Suci extracurricular provides a comprehensive and faith-based framework for religious character development beyond conventional methods.

4. CONCLUSION

Tapak suci Extracurricular at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo High School is one of the activities outside of school hours that is a place for students to develop their potential. This activity aims to produce and develop students in the field of *pencak silat* and to instil character in students. The characters instilled through this activity are based on the *tapak suci* motto, which includes religious beliefs, worship, manners, discipline, faith, security, and responsibility. *Tapak suci* extracurricular at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo High School has strengthened students' character by developing potential and instilling religious values. This activity helps students develop religious character, discipline, manners and responsibility. The impact of *tapak suci* activities is that they form a strong mental and physical. In addition to being physically strong, students are also more disciplined, have good manners, a sense of responsibility and increased obedience in worship.

This study provides a significant contribution to the field of character education, particularly through extracurricular activities such as Tapak Suci at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo High School. The findings demonstrate that Tapak Suci not only develops students' physical abilities but also effectively instills religious and moral values, including discipline, responsibility, manners, and worship obedience. This research enriches the discourse on the role of non-formal education in character development and offers valuable insights for schools and policymakers to optimize extracurricular programs as holistic and sustainable character-building platforms.

This study has several limitations. It was conducted in a single school, Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo High School, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The qualitative approach used emphasizes in-depth descriptions rather than quantitatively measuring the extent of character development. Additionally, the study does not explore the long-term impact of Tapak Suci activities on students' character development outside the school environment. Future research could involve multiple schools, adopt mixed-methods approaches, and investigate longitudinal effects.

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