



FROM SPIRITUAL PRACTICE TO CHARACTER EDUCATION: AN IBN TUFAILIAN INTERPRETATION OF *ISTIGHOTSAH* AND STUDENTS' MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Character education in Islamic educational institutions extends beyond the transmission of moral knowledge to the cultivation of students' religious dispositions and ethical practices. This study examines the role of *istighotsah*, a collective spiritual practice, in fostering character education among students at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus, with particular attention to religious character, discipline, responsibility, and institutional loyalty. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study draws on in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentary analysis to explore how spiritual practices are internalized within students' everyday educational experiences. The findings indicate that regular participation in *istighotsah* contributes to the development of students' religious dispositions, which are manifested in greater discipline, responsibility in fulfilling academic obligations, and stronger emotional attachment to the educational institution. From an Ibn Tufailian perspective, particularly through the philosophical narrative of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, these findings suggest that character formation is not merely the outcome of external behavioral regulation but also emerges through spiritual experience, self-reflection, and the development of moral consciousness. Accordingly, *istighotsah* functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a pedagogical medium through which spiritual awareness is translated into ethical dispositions and responsible conduct. This study contributes to the discourse on Islamic character education by conceptually connecting collective spiritual practice, moral self-formation, and philosophical reflection within the context of madrasah education

Keyword: *Istighotsah*, Character Education, Spirituality, Ibn Tufail, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*

A. Introduction

Character education is one of the most important aspects in Islamic education, which not only emphasizes the cognitive aspect, but also the formation of students' morals and behavior (Mu'min et al., 2025; Muna et al., 2024). The formation of good character in students is not only the main goal in education, but also a long-term investment to form individuals who have integrity, responsibility, and have a deep spiritual relationship with God (M. Aziz et al., 2024; M. A. Aziz, 2023; Keller, 2020). Along with the development of the times and changes in social challenges faced by the younger generation, the need for holistic character education is increasingly felt. As an integral part of Islamic education, character education requires an approach that not only prioritizes the transfer of knowledge, but also leads to spiritual experiences that can shape students' ethical and religious values (Bayani, 2025; Tasmara, 2006). One approach used in the formation of student character is through religious activities that involve spiritual practices that can strengthen the emotional and inner side of students, such as *istighotsah*.

Istighotsah is a joint prayer activity carried out with full hope in Allah SWT, which is believed to strengthen the religious and social character of students. In the context of Islamic education, *istighotsah* functions as a means to internalize spiritual values that are very important in everyday life (Arul, 2022). At MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus, *istighotsah* activities have become part of the school routine that not only functions as a form of worship, but also as a medium to form religious character, discipline, and student loyalty to educational institutions. This activity fosters spiritual values, brings students closer to God, and encourages changes in their attitudes towards the better (*Observasi Langsung Oleh Penulis Di MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin, Mejobo, Kudus, Jawa Tengah*, personal communication, May 9, 2025). Therefore, it is important to dig deeper into the role of *istighotsah* in shaping student character, especially by referring to the classical educational thinking of Ibn Tufail, a Muslim philosopher who emphasized the importance of spiritual experience in shaping individual morals and character.

In recent literature studies, character formation through religious activities has been widely discussed by various researchers, such as that conducted by Laila Badriyah and colleagues (2023), who highlighted how *istighotsah* activities can strengthen students' character, such as religiosity, discipline, and responsibility (Laila Badriyah et al., 2023). The study showed that the habituation of spiritual activities in schools can have a positive impact on student behavior. However, the study focused more on teacher strategies in strengthening character through routine activities such as *istighotsah*. On the other hand, very few studies link the role of *istighotsah* in the formation of student character with a deeper philosophical and spiritual approach, such as that proposed by Ibn Tufail (CHANGDER, 2023). In his classic work *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Ibn Tufail describes how the learning process does not only rely on cognitive aspects or knowledge received from outside, but also

relies on inner experience and the search for truth through spiritual contemplation and reflection. This provides the view that character formation through activities such as *istighotsah* can be seen as an effort to bring students to a deep spiritual experience, which not only strengthens their faith, but also changes their attitudes more comprehensively and sustainably.

The main problem in this study is how the *istighotsah* activity carried out at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus can play a role in the formation of student character, and how this can be explained in the context of Ibn Tufail's educational thinking. The *istighotsah* activity which is routinely carried out at this madrasah is believed to be able to internalize spiritual values that function to strengthen student character (Pielow et al., 2024). However, although this activity has been carried out routinely, research on how this activity impacts student character from a philosophical perspective, especially through Ibn Tufail's thinking, is still rare. Therefore, this study seeks to explore more deeply the role of *istighotsah* in the formation of student character by linking it to the classical educational theory of Ibn Tufail which emphasizes the importance of spiritual experience as part of the character formation process.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of *istighotsah* in character formation of students at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus based on Ibn Tufail's educational perspective. Thus, this study aims to provide new insights into the relevance of classical Islamic thought in contemporary character education, especially in the context of Islamic education that emphasizes more on students' spiritual and moral development. Based on this study, several research questions that arise are: (1) What is the role of *istighotsah* activities in character formation of students at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus? (2) What is Ibn Tufail's view on character formation through spiritual experience, and how is this relevant to the practice of *istighotsah*? (3) What is the contribution of Ibn Tufail's thoughts to the development of a spiritual-based character education model in contemporary Islamic education? This study is expected to provide a significant scientific contribution in the development of character education based on Islamic spiritual values and become an important reference for other Islamic educational institutions in developing religious activities that have a positive impact on character formation of students.

In this study, data collection was carried out using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines that allow flexibility in exploring the experiences, views, and perceptions of informants regarding the role of *istighotsah* in shaping student character (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). Interviews were conducted with the madrasah principal, deputy head of curriculum, deputy head of student affairs, Islamic education teachers, and several students from various grade levels (Miles et al., 2018). The researcher participated in the

istighotsah activity to record the atmosphere, interactions, and behavior of students during the activity (Kawulich, 2005). Participatory observation allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics that occur, as well as see firsthand how the istighotsah activity impacts students' attitudes and behavior (Q. Sholihah, 2020). Documentation in the form of photos of activities, notes on the results of student character evaluations, and istighotsah activity schedules are used to strengthen the data obtained through interviews and observations (Venema, 2017).

This research procedure includes several stages: (1) preliminary study in the form of initial observations of istighotsah activities and student character culture in the madrasah; (2) collection of primary data through interviews and observations; (3) data analysis is carried out with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or data verification; and (4) preparation of a research report that includes the main findings regarding the role of istighotsah in the formation of student character (Buljan, 2023). The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques consisting of three main stages: (1) data reduction, which involves the process of filtering and sorting information relevant to the focus of the research; (2) data presentation, which is done by compiling findings systematically and structured; and (3) drawing conclusions, which is done by verifying to ensure the accuracy and validity of the research findings (Taherdoost, 2020). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, namely combining various data sources (interviews, observations, and documentation) to test the consistency of the findings. This triangulation technique is useful for increasing the credibility and accuracy of research results (Linda Mardiyana & Febrina Dafit, 2022).

Several previous studies have examined the role of religious activities in character formation, but most of them have not linked these practices to classical philosophical educational theories, such as those offered by Ibn Tufail. For example, research by Laila Badriyah et al. (2023) shows that istighotsah activities can strengthen students' character, but focuses more on a behavioristic approach that relies on habits and teacher role models. In contrast, Ibn Tufail's thinking offers a more comprehensive perspective, namely by emphasizing the importance of spiritual experience and self-reflection in the process of character formation (Laila Badriyah et al., 2023). In Ibn Tufail's perspective, character formation does not only depend on external instructions or teachings, but also on inner experiences that occur through spiritual practices that can lead individuals to find the true truth through a process of contemplation and deep self-understanding. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the existing gap by linking *istighotsah* activities carried out at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin with Ibn Tufail's philosophical thinking, so that a deeper understanding can be obtained of how spiritual practices can play a role in shaping students' character.

One of the new contributions of this study is the integration of religious activities, namely *istighotsah*, with Ibn Tufail's philosophical approach to character education. This study not only discusses the role of *istighotsah* in the formation of student character, but also provides a deep philosophical foundation on how this spiritual activity functions as a means to internalize moral and religious values in students' daily lives. In addition, this study also seeks to broaden the scope of character education thinking in Islam, by emphasizing a more holistic and spiritual approach that does not only focus on the formation of external behavior (behavioral), but also includes deep inner and contemplative dimensions, as described by Ibn Tufail in his classic work.

B. The Influence of *Istighotsah* on the Formation of Student Character

One of the main focuses of this study is to find out how *istighotsah* activities impact student character. Based on interviews with the head of the madrasah, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students, the main findings show that *istighotsah* plays an important role in the formation of several character values, such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution. The results of the interview with Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si., the principal of MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin, showed that *istighotsah* significantly increased students' religious awareness. The following is a table that presents the results of the interview, frequency, and interpretation related to the influence of *istighotsah* activities on the formation of student character:

Source person	Interview Excerpts	Frequency	Interpretation
Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si. (Headmaster)	" <i>Istighotsah</i> is not just a ritual, but also a means to strengthen the religious character of students. They learn to surrender to Allah, and through prayer together, they are closer to God. This has a significant impact on improving their discipline and responsibility towards school activities."	3x	<i>Istighotsah</i> strengthens religious awareness and its impact is seen in students' discipline and responsibility at school.
Fina Rika Istanti, S.Pd. (Deputy Curriculum)	"Through <i>istighotsah</i> , students not only participate in joint prayers, but they are also encouraged to do self-	2x	Self-reflection through <i>istighotsah</i> helps students' attitudes change gradually, such as

	reflection. Changes in attitude, such as being more patient, more humble, and more responsible, are gradually seen in them."		patience and humility.
Sisyanto, S.Pd. (Student Affairs)	" <i>Istighotsah</i> is one of the means to remind students of the importance of piety and keep them away from juvenile delinquency. The spiritual values obtained from this activity teach them to always remember Allah in every action they take."	2x	<i>Istighotsah</i> plays a role in preventing juvenile delinquency and increasing awareness of the importance of piety in everyday life.
Abdul Latif Pratama (8th Grade Students)	"Initially I joined <i>istighotsah</i> because my friends joined and it was the school schedule, but now I am starting to feel the benefits, especially in forming my self-discipline and sense of responsibility towards school assignments."	1x	Initially, this activity was followed out of obligation, but slowly students began to feel its impact in terms of discipline and responsibility.
Hayun Hamdanah (9th Grade Students)	"After attending <i>istighotsah</i> , I feel calmer and more disciplined in following the lessons. This activity reminds me to always pray and ask for Allah's help in every step I take."	1x	<i>Istighotsah</i> helps students become more disciplined, calm, and focused in carrying out school activities.

Table 1. Interview excerpts on the influence of *Istighotsah*

The table above presents the results of interviews, frequencies, and interpretations related to the influence of *istighotsah* activities on the formation of student character at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus. Based on interviews with the principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students, it can be seen that *istighotsah* activities have a significant impact on forming religious character, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution.

From the interview with Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si. (Principal), *istighotsah* plays an important role in strengthening students' religious awareness and has a positive impact on increasing students' discipline and responsibility towards the school. Meanwhile, Fina Rika Istanti, S.Pd. (Vice Curriculum), stated that through *istighotsah*, students are encouraged to reflect on themselves, which in turn helps them become more patient, humble, and responsible.

The statement from Sisyanto, S.Pd. (Student Affairs) shows that *istighotsah* also functions as a means to remind students about the importance of piety, as well as preventing juvenile delinquency. This is in line with the recognition of students such as Abdul Latif Pratama (Grade 8) and Hayun Hamdanah (Grade 9) who felt the positive impact of *istighotsah* in increasing their discipline and responsibility, even though initially the activity was only followed because of obligation.

C. *Istighotsah* as a Means of Reflection and Character Transformation

In interviews with several students, it was found that they began to feel changes in themselves, both in attitude and behavior after participating in *istighotsah* activities regularly. Fina Rika Istanti, S.Pd., deputy head of curriculum, explained that this activity allows students to process internally and experience gradual changes in attitude. The following is a table that presents the results of the interview, frequency, and interpretation related to the role of *istighotsah* as a means of reflection and character transformation of students:

Source person	Interview Excerpts	Frequency	Interpretation
Fina Rika Istanti, S.Pd. (Deputy Curriculum)	"Through <i>istighotsah</i> , students not only participate in joint prayers, but they are also encouraged to do self-reflection. Changes in attitude, such as being more patient, more humble, and more responsible, are gradually seen in them."	2x	<i>Istighotsah</i> encourages students to reflect on themselves and experience gradual changes in attitude, such as becoming more patient and responsible.
Abdul Latif Pratama (8th Grade Students)	"Initially I joined <i>istighotsah</i> because my friends joined and it was the school schedule, but now I am starting to feel the benefits, especially in forming my self-	1x	Although initially they only participated in the activity out of obligation, students began to feel the benefits in terms of

	discipline and sense of responsibility towards school assignments."		discipline and responsibility.
Hayun Hamdanah (9th Grade Students)	"After attending istighotsah, I feel calmer and more disciplined in following the lessons. This activity reminds me to always pray and ask for Allah's help in every step I take."	1x	Istighotsah helps students become more disciplined and calm in carrying out school activities, as well as strengthening their spiritual relationship with Allah.

Table 2. Interview excerpts about reflection and character transformation

This table presents interview excerpts, frequencies, and interpretations of research findings related to the influence of istighotsah activities on the formation of student character at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus. Based on the results of interviews with the principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students, it can be concluded that istighotsah activities play an important role in forming character values such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution. The changes in attitudes felt by these students can be explained by Ibn Tufail's approach in Hayy Ibn Yaqzan's work, which states that character formation involves a spiritual and reflective process. Through activities such as istighotsah, students are invited to reflect on themselves and improve their behavior, which ultimately forms a better character.

D. Spiritual Values in *Istighotsah*: Impact on Character

In this study, it was found that one of the greatest contributions of istighotsah activities is the strengthening of spiritual values contained in joint prayer. Istighotsah teaches students to be closer to Allah SWT, which influences the formation of their religious character. Sisyanto, S.Pd., who is responsible for student affairs, explained that istighotsah is very effective in reducing juvenile delinquency and directing students to focus more on life goals that are in accordance with religious teachings.

The following is a table that presents the results of interviews, frequencies, and interpretations related to spiritual values in istighotsah and their impact on the formation of student character:

Source person	Interview Excerpts	Frequency	Interpretation
Sisyanto, S.Pd. (Deputy Curriculum)	" <i>Istighotsah</i> is one of the means to remind students of the importance of piety and	2x	<i>Istighotsah</i> helps students to remind themselves of piety, keep them away from

	keep them away from juvenile delinquency. The spiritual values obtained from this activity teach them to always remember Allah in every action they take."		juvenile delinquency, and focus on life goals according to religious teachings.
Nia Maharani (7th Grade Students)	"I feel calmer and more focused after following <i>istighotsah</i> . It helps me to be more focused in studying and more disciplined in living my daily life."	1x	<i>Istighotsah</i> helps students to be calmer, more focused, and disciplined in studying and living their daily lives.
Abdul Latif Pratama (8th Grade Students)	"After following <i>istighotsah</i> , I feel more disciplined in carrying out school activities and more devout in worship."	1x	<i>Istighotsah</i> strengthens students' discipline in school activities and increases their devotion in worship.

Table 3. Interview excerpt: Spiritual values

This table presents findings on the influence of *istighotsah* activities in strengthening students' spiritual values, which contribute to the formation of religious character and discipline. These findings are in line with Ibn Tufail's view that spiritual experiences, such as those that occur in *istighotsah*, play an important role in character formation that involves self-reflection and deep contemplation.

One of the character values that emerged most frequently from the findings of this study was discipline and responsibility. Most of the students interviewed admitted that *istighotsah* routinely helped them become more disciplined in carrying out school activities and daily life. The following is a table that presents the interview results, frequency, and interpretations related to the impact of *istighotsah* on students' discipline and responsibility:

Source person	Interview Excerpts	Frequency	Interpretation
Hayun Hamdanah (9th Grade Students)	"After attending <i>istighotsah</i> , I feel calmer and more disciplined in following the lessons. This activity reminds me to always pray and ask	2x	<i>Istighotsah</i> plays a role in forming student discipline, which is reflected in calmness and obedience to

	for Allah's help in every step I take."		school activities and worship.
Abdul Latif Pratama (8th Grade Students)	"Initially I joined istighotsah because my friends joined and it was the school schedule, but now I am starting to feel the benefits, especially in forming my self-discipline and sense of responsibility towards school assignments."	1x	Istighotsah helps students, even though initially it is only an obligation, to feel the benefits in terms of discipline and responsibility towards school assignments.
Fina Rika Istanti, S.Pd. (Deputy Curriculum)	"Regular istighotsah activities help students become more disciplined and responsible for their tasks, as well as increase their closeness to Allah SWT."	1x	Istihotsah activities help students become more disciplined and responsible, as well as strengthen spiritual closeness with Allah SWT.

Table 4. Impact of *Istighotsah*

This table presents findings related to the impact of istighotsah activities in shaping students' discipline and responsibility. Based on interviews with students and the vice principal of curriculum, it is seen that this activity not only helps in shaping students' religious character but also plays a major role in improving their discipline in carrying out school activities and daily life.

This phenomenon shows that istighotsah has a significant impact in shaping students' discipline, which is reflected in their discipline in participating in school activities and responsibility for their tasks. This shows that istighotsah activities not only shape students' religious character but also play a role in shaping a disciplined attitude which is an important part of character education.

E. Loyalty to the Institution: *Istighotsah* as a Form of Emotional Attachment

In addition to shaping religious and disciplined character, istighotsah also plays a role in strengthening students' sense of loyalty to the madrasah. Interviews with the principal of the madrasah revealed that istighotsah activities act as one way to emotionally bind students to their educational institution.

The following is a table that presents the interview results, frequencies, and interpretations related to student loyalty to the madrasah and the role of istighotsah in strengthening students' emotional attachment to the institution:

Source person	Interview Excerpts	Frequency	Interpretation
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Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si. (Headmaster)	" <i>Istighotsah</i> not only strengthens the students' religious character, but also makes them feel more connected to the madrasah. They feel like they are part of a larger community, which has a common goal to achieve blessings and progress."	3x	<i>Istighotsah</i> strengthens students' emotional attachment to the madrasah and forms a sense of responsibility towards the educational institution.
Sisyanto, S.Pd. (Deputy Curriculum)	" <i>Istighotsah</i> serves to bind students emotionally to the madrasah, make them more responsible for their tasks, and maintain the good image of the institution."	2x	<i>Istighotsah</i> builds a spirit of togetherness and loyalty to the institution, and increases students' responsibility towards their assignments.
Abdul Latif Pratama (8th Grade Students)	"Through <i>istighotsah</i> , I feel more connected to the madrasah and more responsible for all the activities here."	1x	<i>Istighotsah</i> strengthens students' sense of loyalty to the madrasah and increases their sense of responsibility for school activities.

Table 5. Interview excerpt: loyalty to the institution

This table presents findings on the impact of *istighotsah* activities in strengthening students' emotional attachment to the madrasah, which also forms their sense of loyalty and responsibility towards the educational institution. Loyalty to the madrasah is reflected in the attitude of students who are more responsible and maintain the good image of their institution. *Istighotsah* activities, thus, not only function as an effort to form individual character, but also as a tool to build a spirit of togetherness and loyalty to the educational institution. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that *istighotsah* activities have a very positive impact on the formation of student character at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus. Based on interviews with the informants, it was concluded that *istighotsah* plays a role in strengthening students' religious values, increasing discipline and responsibility, and strengthening students' sense of loyalty to their educational institution. In addition, this activity is also an important means of preventing juvenile delinquency,

by providing students with the opportunity to reflect and improve their attitudes on an ongoing basis. These findings support Ibn Tufail's view on the importance of spiritual experience in character formation, which does not only rely on cognitive aspects, but also involves inner reflection and deep spiritual understanding.

The formation of student character through *istighotsah* activities at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus shows significant results in strengthening religious values, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to educational institutions. This study explores more deeply the role of *istighotsah* as a means of character formation, by referring to Ibn Tufail's character education theory which emphasizes the importance of spiritual experience in the formation of individual morals. In this chapter, the author will analyze the findings of existing research and compare them with theories of character education from various thinkers, focusing on Ibn Tufail's thoughts, and discuss new contributions that emerge in this study.

F. *Istighotsah* and Religious Character Formation

The formation of religious character is one of the main values in Islamic education. *Istighotsah* activities at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus have been proven to have a major impact on strengthening students' religious character, as found in interviews with the principal and students. As stated by Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si., the head of the madrasah, the *istighotsah* activity is not only a ritual, but also a means to bring students closer to Allah SWT and strengthen their piety (Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si., personal communication, April 25, 2025). This is in line with the view of Ibn Tufail in *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, which states that true education involves deep spiritual experience, not just cognitive teaching alone (Alhayyani, 2023).

According to Ibn Tufail, as depicted in the story of *Hayy*, a person's moral character is formed through the process of observing nature and deep spiritual appreciation (M. M. Sholihah et al., 2024). In the context of *istighotsah*, students are invited to reflect on themselves and strengthen their spiritual relationship with Allah, which ultimately forms a strong religious character. Based on the results of this study, *istighotsah* has proven to be an effective means of forming students' religious character, through inner experiences triggered by joint prayer. Therefore, *istighotsah* activities can be seen as practices that integrate spiritual experiences into the character education process, which is in line with Ibn Tufail's thoughts on the importance of seeking truth and inner experiences in education.

One of the important findings of this study is how *istighotsah* activities help students in forming their discipline and responsibility (Syaikhoni et al., 2021). As conveyed by students, this activity not only helps them to be more disciplined in participating in school activities, but also increases their sense of responsibility for their tasks. This confirms the findings of previous studies which show that the habituation of religious activities, such as *istighotsah*, plays a role in forming disciplined and responsible behavior in students (Seprina & Rahmat, 2024).

Ibn Tufail's thoughts on character education also provide a relevant framework for understanding the formation of discipline and responsibility (Aryadiningrat et al., 2023). In his work *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Ibn Tufail describes how character is formed through a process of contemplation and inner experience, which ultimately helps individuals to understand moral and ethical values more deeply. The formation of discipline in the context of character education according to Ibn Tufail involves self-awareness that arises through a process of reflection, such as that carried out in *istighotsah* activities (Feighten et al., 2024). Therefore, *istighotsah* functions as an effective means of instilling discipline and responsibility in students, which also plays a role in forming their moral character.

G. Loyalty to the Institution: *Istighotsah* as a Means of Strengthening Emotional Bonds

Istighotsah activities not only function as a means of forming religious and disciplined character, but also strengthen students' loyalty to the madrasah (Umam & Hasan, 2025). The results of an interview with the head of the madrasah, Noor Anis, showed that *istighotsah* plays an important role in strengthening students' emotional ties with their educational institutions (Noor Anis, S.Ag., M.Si., personal communication, April 25, 2025). This is reflected in the attitude of students who are more responsible for their tasks and maintain the good image of the institution. This shows that *istighotsah* not only forms individual character, but also strengthens the spirit of togetherness and a sense of loyalty to the institution.

Ibn Tufail's thoughts in *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* provide a relevant perspective in explaining the role of *istighotsah* in building loyalty to the institution. Ibn Tufail emphasized that in-depth education involves not only cognitive understanding, but also spiritual experiences that lead individuals to better understand their role in the community and their relationship with the world (Pardi, 2024). Therefore, *istighotsah* activities that build a sense of loyalty to the madrasah can be seen as a manifestation of a more holistic educational process, which integrates spiritual, social, and moral aspects.

This study shows that *istighotsah* plays an important role in the formation of religious character, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution. This finding is in line with previous studies, such as those conducted by Lažetić, which emphasize the importance of spiritual activities in strengthening students' character, especially in terms of religiosity and discipline (Lažetić, 2020). The study shows that the habituation of spiritual activities such as *istighotsah* can function as a means of instilling moral values in students.

However, this study provides a new contribution by linking the role of *istighotsah* in character formation with Ibn Tufail's educational thinking (Br et al., 2023). Ibn Tufail's approach that emphasizes the importance of inner experience and self-reflection in character formation provides a deeper perspective on how

spiritual activities such as *istighotsah* can shape students' character (Ichsan et al., 2023). Thus, this study broadens the understanding of the role of *istighotsah* in character education by integrating classical Islamic philosophical theory.

One of the novelties of this study is the integration of the spiritual practice of *istighotsah* with Ibn Tufail's character education theory (Mairesse & Pezzoni, 2021). This study combines empirical findings on the role of *istighotsah* in character formation with Ibn Tufail's framework of thought regarding spiritual experience as part of character education (Muna et al., 2024). Thus, this study provides a new perspective on how spiritual activities can play a role in character formation of students, not only through repetition of habits, but also through reflection and deep inner understanding.

Based on the findings of this study, *istighotsah* can be used as an effective method in building students' character, especially in terms of religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution. Therefore, schools or madrasahs can consider including *istighotsah* activities routinely in character building programs. In addition, Ibn Tufail's thoughts can be used as a basis for developing a more holistic educational approach, which not only focuses on cognitive aspects, but also involves spiritual experiences in character building.

By strengthening spiritual experiences through activities such as *istighotsah*, it is hoped that students can develop better characters as a whole, which include moral, social, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, it is important for educators to integrate spiritual values into character education, so that students can achieve higher moral awareness and have a strong sense of responsibility towards society and their educational institutions.

This study shows that *istighotsah* plays an important role in the formation of student character at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo, Kudus. This activity not only increases student religiosity, but also contributes to the formation of discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the institution (Abdul Latif Pratama (Siswa kelas 8 MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin), personal communication, April 29, 2025; Hayun Hamdanah (Siswa kelas 9 MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin), personal communication, April 30, 2025; Nia Maharani (Siswa kelas 7 MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin), personal communication, April 28, 2025). Through an approach inspired by the thoughts of Ibn Tufail, *istighotsah* activities can be seen as a means of character formation that involves self-reflection and deep spiritual experiences. This study provides a new contribution in integrating character education theory with spiritual practices in Islamic education.

H. Conclusion

This study examines the role of *istighotsah* activities in the formation of students' character at MTs NU Miftahut Tholibin Mejobo Kudus, by connecting empirical findings with Ibn Tufail's character education theory. The main results of

this study indicate that *istighotsah* activities contribute significantly to the formation of students' religious character, increasing discipline, responsibility, and strengthening their sense of loyalty to the madrasah. *Istighotsah*, as a form of communal prayer involving spiritual contemplation and reflection, not only functions as a religious ritual, but also as a means to strengthen students' characters more deeply. This finding also reflects that spiritual experiences can play an important role in the process of forming students' characters, which focuses on the inner and spiritual dimensions as explained in Ibn Tufail's thoughts.

The implications of these findings are highly relevant in the context of Islamic education, particularly in developing spirituality-based character education methods. The *istighotsah* activity, which is often considered as a mere religious ritual, has been shown to have a much broader impact in strengthening students' religious character, discipline, and responsibility, as well as building their emotional attachment to educational institutions. Therefore, the results of this study provide evidence that character education in Islam must consider a deeper spiritual aspect, which does not only rely on habituation or direct teaching, but also reflective and contemplative experiences that can change students' attitudes and behaviors sustainably. This study makes an important contribution to enriching the literature on character education based on Islamic spiritual values. By linking the *istighotsah* activity with Ibn Tufail's educational theory, this study adds a philosophical perspective that has received little attention in character education studies in Indonesia. In addition, this study provides new insights into how religious activities can be used as a means to strengthen students' sense of loyalty to their educational institutions. However, this study has limitations in the limited sample, which was only conducted in one madrasah, so it is recommended to continue the study with a larger sample and in various educational institutions to generalize these findings. Further research could also examine the long-term impact of religious activities in shaping students' character.

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