



Religious Cultural Transformation in Building a Child-Friendly Environment in Vocational Education: A Case Study of SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng

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Abstract

Religious culture constitutes an essential component in forming students' moral dispositions, especially in vocational institutions that predominantly emphasize technical competencies. Amid the pressures of globalization and evolving socio-cultural dynamics, this research examines the transformation of religious culture as a strategic effort to strengthen the establishment of a child-friendly vocational school environment at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. The study aims to identify the mechanisms through which religious values are incorporated into the institutional culture through structured planning, systematic implementation, and continuous evaluation. Applying a qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological orientation, the data were gathered via interviews, observations, and document analysis, and processed through Miles and Huberman's interactive analytical framework. The results indicate that the planning stage encompassed the reinforcement of the school's religious mission, the formulation of program designs by ISMUBA teachers, and the dissemination of value-based commitments through institutional meetings. The implementation phase adhered to Kurt Lewin's change model, starting with the disengagement from outdated practices, followed by the introduction of religious programs—such as Qur'an recitation, One Week One Hadith, congregational prayers, and Baitul Arqam—and culminating with the stabilization of these practices as habitual routines. The evaluation process concentrated on the consistency of program execution, the extent of stakeholder participation, and the formulation of measures to ensure long-term sustainability. These religious programs were implemented through participatory, non-coercive, and supportive approaches that promoted mutual respect, student participation, and a psychologically safe learning environment, thereby aligning with the core principles of a child-friendly school. The study concludes that transforming religious culture significantly contributes to establishing a child-friendly vocational school atmosphere by cultivating ethical and spiritual values in parallel with technical skill development.

Keywords: Religious Culture, Child Friendly School, Kurt Lewin Model, Vocational Education;

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

Vocational education occupies a strategic position in preparing learners to navigate the demands of global competition by equipping them with relevant technical skills, applied knowledge, and professional work ethics. In the Indonesian context, vocational schools are expected not only to produce graduates ready to enter the labor market, but also to contribute to national development through the formation of productive, responsible, and morally grounded human resources (Ritonga, 2022). Nevertheless, contemporary challenges shaped by rapid globalization, digital transformation, and shifting moral orientations among young people indicate that technical expertise alone is insufficient (Mawardi, 2021). Vocational institutions are

therefore required to integrate spiritual, ethical, and moral formation into their educational practices in a more comprehensive and systemic manner.

Islamic-based vocational schools such as SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng bear a dual mandate: achieving technical proficiency while simultaneously cultivating Islamic values as part of the school's institutional identity. This mandate is especially significant considering the diverse socio-cultural and religious backgrounds of students, many of whom may not possess a strong moral foundation or consistent access to structured religious guidance (Mawardi, 2021). Within this context, transforming the school's religious culture becomes a strategic effort to ensure that moral and spiritual development accompanies vocational training. Religious culture refers to the ensemble of values, norms, beliefs, and practices derived from Islamic teachings that guide behavior and shape interpersonal interactions in the school environment, including Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayers, ethical behavior in practical workshops, and prophetic conduct modeled by teachers.

Although previous studies have examined the role of religious values in shaping student behavior, the effectiveness of character education programs, and the psychological benefits of spiritual habituation, empirical research addressing the systematic transformation of religious culture—through structured planning, implementation, and evaluation—in vocational school settings remains limited. Much of the existing literature discusses character education broadly without detailing the organizational and cultural shifts necessary to institutionalize religious values within everyday school routines.

This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the transformation of religious culture at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng as part of its initiative to implement the Child-Friendly Vocational-Based School (CFVBS) model. The model integrates child-friendly principles—emphasizing safety, inclusiveness, and participatory engagement—with vocational training and Islamic pedagogical values. The research focuses on how the school designs, carries out, and evaluates religious programs that collectively shape students into disciplined, ethical, and spiritually aware vocational graduates.

In this study, Child-Friendly School refers to a learning environment that ensures students' rights, safety, participation, inclusiveness, and protection from physical and psychological violence in accordance with Indonesia's Child-Friendly School policy. Accordingly, religious programs at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng are implemented through mentoring, role modelling, and active student participation rather than coercive practices. This approach enables students to internalize religious values while maintaining their psychological well-being, sense of security, and active engagement in school life.

As a case study, this research provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the fields of vocational education and Islamic pedagogy. The findings are expected to offer insights for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers in developing integrative models that align vocational skill development with religious and moral formation through a holistic and sustainable educational framework.

METHOD

منهج

This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to investigate how religious culture is transformed to support the development of a child-friendly vocational school environment. The phenomenological orientation was selected to capture participants' lived

experiences and subjective interpretations regarding the integration of Islamic values within vocational education settings (Vera Nurfajriani et al., 2024). The study was conducted at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, Banyuwangi, East Java, which was purposively chosen due to its relevance to the research focus.

The participants consisted of one school principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, one ISMUBA teacher, and one student who were purposively selected because they were directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school's religious culture programs. Data were gathered through triangulated techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The interviews explored participants' perspectives on religious practices implemented in the school. Observations were directed toward routine activities such as Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayers, and other religiously oriented habituation programs. Documentation included attendance records, evaluation sheets, and visual evidence of religious activities carried out within the school.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, encompassing data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To strengthen validity and credibility, the study applied methodological and source triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field, and peer debriefing. These strategies ensured that the findings were dependable and reflected the actual conditions of the research site. The analytical process was conducted inductively, allowing patterns, categories, and themes to emerge from participants' experiences related to the school's religious culture and its transformation processes.

RESULT | نتائج

Planning the Transformation of Religious Culture at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng

Based on the interview results, the researcher concludes that the planning of religious cultural transformation at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng was designed comprehensively and systematically. The religious programs developed by ISMUBA teachers were not merely routine activities, but rather carried dimensions of character education and spiritual reinforcement for the students. Each activity—from morning Qur'an recitation, the "One Week One Hadith" program, congregational prayers, to intensive programs during Ramadan such as Baitul Arqam—was organized with the goal of shaping a holistic Islamic personality.

Moreover, the active involvement of students in leading religious activities indicates a process of internalizing the values of responsibility, courage, and independence. These programs were not implemented in isolation; rather, they were integrated into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning assessment and framed within an atmosphere that connects students with their social and spiritual environment. This reflects that the religious culture in this school is designed as part of a systemic approach that supports the contextual and continuous habituation of Islamic values.

The findings obtained by the researcher during the planning stage of the religious cultural transformation were based on data collected through observations and in-depth interviews with the Principal, ISMUBA teachers, and the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. First, there is a strengthening of the school's vision and mission regarding religiosity, in which religious values are explicitly emphasized as a foundational direction of vocational-based education. Second, ISMUBA teachers technically formulated religious activities by developing programs such as morning Qur'an recitation, One Week One

Hadith, congregational prayers, and Baitul Arqam. Third, the importance of religious culture was disseminated through annual meeting forums, ensuring that all school stakeholders share the same perception and commitment to fostering a religious and inclusive child-friendly vocational school environment.

Implementation of Religious Cultural Transformation in Creating a Child-Friendly Vocational School at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng

The implementation of religious cultural transformation at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng is a crucial step in shaping students who are not only vocationally skilled but also have strong character within a supportive and child-friendly learning environment. This transformation is carried out in a gradual and systematic manner involving the school principal, ISMUBA teachers, curriculum coordinators, and the students themselves.

The transformation focuses not only on religious activities but also on instilling spiritual and moral values into daily school life. This implementation is analyzed using Kurt Lewin's three-stage change model: Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze.

a. Unfreeze Stage (Dismantling Old Patterns)

In this stage, the school began to realize the need to change old patterns that prioritized vocational skills without fully nurturing students' character. Previously, religious culture was symbolic and not yet embedded in daily school routines.

b. Change Stage (Transforming Values and Behaviors)

After unfreezing the old patterns, the school entered the change stage by consistently implementing religious routines. Programs such as daily Qur'an recitation, One Week One Hadith, and Dhuhr congregational prayer are carried out regularly, involving students as active participants. This finding is supported by a student's statement: *"Personally, I feel more comfortable because the school environment feels calmer and less tense."* This indicates that the implementation of religious programs contributes to students' psychological comfort, which is an important characteristic of a child-friendly school.

c. Refreeze Stage (Institutionalizing and Reinforcing Values)

The findings at the *Refreeze* stage are based on data obtained through observations and interviews with the Principal, ISMUBA teachers, and students. Two key aspects were identified: first, the institutionalization of the programs; and second, adaptation and sustainability.

Evaluation of Religious Cultural Transformation in Creating a Child-Friendly Vocational School at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng

The findings from the evaluation phase are based on data obtained through observations and interviews with the Principal, ISMUBA teachers, and the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs. Three main aspects were identified: first, program consistency; second, participation and acceptance; and third, sustainable follow-up actions. Students were also involved in the evaluation process by providing feedback through discussions with teachers and the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM). Their suggestions were considered in improving future religious programs, reflecting one of the core principles of a child-friendly school.

The following table presents a summary of the key elements in the evaluation process of the religious cultural transformation aimed at creating a child-friendly vocational school environment at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. This evaluation was conducted to assess the

extent to which the program has been implemented consistently, the level of participation and acceptance among school stakeholders, and the follow-up measures taken to ensure the sustainability of religious values within the context of vocational education.

These findings or results, if displayed in a table, are as follows:

Table 1. Table Title

No.	Research Focus	Result
1.	How is the planning of religious cultural transformation carried out at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng?	a. Strengthening of the school's vision and mission related to religiosity b. Technical formulation of religious activities by ISMUBA teachers c. Socialization of the importance of religious culture in annual school meetings
2.	How is the implementation of religious cultural transformation in creating a child-friendly vocational school at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng?	Unfreeze Stage (Breaking old habits): a. Awareness of the need for change b. Building initial commitment Change Stage (Changing values and behaviors): a. Morning Qur'an recitation b. One Week One Hadith c. Dhuhr congregational prayer d. <i>Baitul Arqam</i> program e. Worship practice exams f. Student involvement and value habituation g. Mentoring and coaching approaches Refreeze Stage (Habituation and value reinforcement): a. Institutionalization of programs b. Adaptation and sustainability
3.	How is the evaluation of religious cultural transformation conducted in creating a child-friendly vocational school at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng?	a. Program consistency b. Participation and acceptance c. Sustainable follow-up actions

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

Planning the Transformation of Religious Culture

The planning stage serves as a strategic foundation in transforming the religious culture at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. This stage focuses not only on administrative matters but also on ideological construction to shape vocational students with strong spiritual character. The planning consists of three main components:

1. Strengthening the Vision and Mission Based on Tawheed

The school's vision and mission are designed with Islamic values as the core foundation, positioning religious character not as an addition but as the central institutional goal. These values are reaffirmed through strategic forums such as annual work meetings and curriculum workshops, ensuring collective understanding among all stakeholders. According to Mawardi, a school's vision and mission serve as the primary foundation for shaping the direction of cultural transformation within educational institutions (Mawardi, 2021). When religious values are embedded in the school's vision, they will permeate all forms of programs and institutional behaviors. In the context of character education, T. Tajudin and Aprilianto also emphasize that planning aligned with a religious vision can foster a consistent and sustainable school culture (Tajudin & Aprilianto, 2020).

As stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ٢

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah." (Al-Baqarah: 2)

2. Contextual Religious Program Design by ISMUBA Teachers

ISMUBA teachers develop religious programs tailored to the characteristics of vocational students, such as morning Qur'an reading (Ngaji Pagi), congregational prayer, One Week One Hadith, and Baitul Arqam. These programs serve as tools for cultivating practical and spiritual habits. According to Kurnia, a supportive physical and social environment can accelerate students' behavioral changes in a more positive direction (Kurnia et al., 2024). Therefore, SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng not only focuses on religious activities as scheduled programs but also strives to create a holistic culture that fosters the growth of religious awareness among students.

This aligns with Surah Ali-Imran 104:

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ١٠٤

"And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and it is they who will be the successful."

(Qur'an, Surah Āli 'Imrān [3]: 104)

3. Strategic Socialization through Formal Forums

The values of religious culture are communicated through formal events like annual work meetings to ensure shared commitment and policy alignment. This strategic communication fosters collective awareness and unity.

As guided by the Qur'an in Surah An-Nahl 125:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ١٢٥

It's means: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is rightly guided."

(Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl [16]: 125)

Through this comprehensive approach, religious transformation at the school becomes an ideological and systemic movement aimed at producing muttaqin (God-conscious individuals) who are also vocationally skilled.

Implementation of Religious Cultural Transformation

The implementation process follows Kurt Lewin's change model—Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze—allowing a structured and sustainable value transformation in the vocational school context.

1. Unfreeze (Breaking Old Patterns)

The school initiates change by dissolving rigid, individualistic, and performance-centric patterns, replacing them with collective religious awareness. Teachers, especially from ISMUBA, serve as daily role models in spiritual practices, initiating a shift toward collaborative and inclusive behavior. According to Abidin et al, teachers who exemplify religious behavior have a lasting impact on students' character (Abidin et al., 2024). At SMKS

Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, this is shown through teacher involvement in activities like congregational Dhuhr prayer, *One Week One Hadith*, *Baitul Arqam*, and morning Qur'an recitation. Previously, students tended to be individualistic. Religious programs encouraged collaboration and social participation. As Nuranggraen et al. notes, group-based activities build social responsibility and a sense of belonging, seen in increased student organization (IPM) involvement (Nuranggraen et al., 2024). The unfreezing stage also promoted a child-friendly, inclusive environment through open communication and humanistic approaches. Activities were held in open spaces and the mosque to ensure comfort and avoid authoritarianism. Wulandari in Wiyani emphasizes that inclusive religious activities strengthen peer bonds and create a positive atmosphere. This transformation helped shift the school from an academic focus to a holistic environment that nurtures both spiritual and social growth—laying the foundation for further change (c).

2. Change (Value and Attitude Transformation)

Daily religious routines such as morning Qur'an reading, congregational prayer, and One Week One Hadith foster holistic character development. These practices integrate spiritual and social values into vocational learning, nurturing empathy, discipline, and social responsibility. At the *change* stage, SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng implemented various consistent and engaging religious programs to foster new habits among students. These initiatives are designed to be educational, participatory, and enjoyable, encouraging students to embrace change positively.

Morning Qur'an Recitation opens the school day with collective Qur'an reading, fostering spiritual discipline and psychological readiness. Kurnia found that starting the day with spiritual activity enhances students' focus and learning motivation (Kurnia et al., 2024).

Congregational Dhuhr Prayer promotes discipline and togetherness, strengthening social bonds and respect for time. According to Ariani, it deepens students' connection with each other and religious values. One Week One Hadith engages students in understanding and applying a hadith weekly (Hariani & Wahdini, 2022). Firman & Natsir showed this improves Islamic knowledge and moral character (Firman & Natsir, 2025). Practical Worship Exams assess students' ability to perform religious practices correctly, while motivating them to worship more sincerely (Mangestuti & Aziz, 2023). Baitul Arqam is a spiritual and leadership development program for new students that introduces Muhammadiyah values and fosters moral foundations and solidarity (Syahrir et al., 2022). This stage in Kurt Lewin's change model is marked by constructive and values-based religious practices. The transformation not only reinforces religious observance but also instills empathy, responsibility, and care—core elements of a child-friendly school. These findings also indicate that religious programs were implemented through mentoring, teacher role modelling, and active student participation rather than coercive practices. Students were encouraged to lead prayers, Qur'an recitation, and other religious activities, allowing them to express themselves while developing responsibility and self-confidence. This participatory approach helps balance religious discipline with the principles of a child-friendly school that emphasize respect, inclusion, and psychological well-being (Anwar et al., 2023; Susanto, 2022). The success of this phase is evident in the students' behavioral shifts and the emerging collective culture. The next stage, *refreeze*, aims to sustain and solidify these positive changes.

3. Refreeze (Internalizing New Values)

The *refreeze* stage in Kurt Lewin's change model involves stabilizing newly adopted values into everyday school culture. At SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, this phase ensures that religious values are not just practiced during activities but become ingrained habits that shape the school's identity. Programs like *morning Qur'an recitation*, *congregational prayer*, and *One Week One Hadith* continue consistently, not merely as routines, but as internalization tools. Structured scheduling and teacher involvement, especially from ISMUBA teachers and homeroom advisors, integrate these programs into the school system. Teachers remain key role models. Their consistent actions—greeting, leading prayers, showing discipline—deeply influence students' behavior. As Ni'mah et al. notes, students more easily adopt values through observing respected adults. ISMUBA teachers also act as mentors, making religious habituation feel guided rather than forced. The school regularly evaluates religious activities to identify areas for improvement (Ni'mah et al., 2023). As Kurt Lewin et al. explain, sustainable value transformation requires ongoing, adaptive evaluation and strategy refinement. The success of *refreeze* is evident in the more respectful, disciplined, and spiritually grounded school environment (Mahmud et al., 2022). Teachers report that students are easier to guide and interactions are more courteous. Religious values have become a shared identity, requiring less external supervision. Wiyani emphasizes that a spiritually rich school climate fosters student character. Such an environment not only brings inner peace but also nurtures responsibility, empathy, and discipline (Wiyani, 2020). This finding is supported by a student's statement that the school environment became "calmer and less tense," indicating that the transformation of religious culture contributes to students' psychological comfort and positive school experiences. These conditions reflect an important aspect of student well-being, where students feel safe, supported, and emotionally comfortable in the learning environment (Kurnia et al., 2024; Wiyani, 2020). When students feel spiritually supported and surrounded by positive examples, they internalize moral values more easily. Ultimately, the *refreeze* stage at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng confirms that religious values have become a lasting part of the school culture—supporting both character development and the school's identity as a child-friendly vocational institution.

New values are strengthened through consistent practice and exemplary behavior. Teachers guide students continuously, and periodic evaluations ensure programs remain relevant.

This is reflected in the Hadith narrated by Muslim:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ قَالَ وَكَأَنْتَ عَائِشَةُ إِذَا عَمِلْتَ الْعَمَلَ لَزِمْتَهُ

Meaning: "From Aisha that the Messenger of Allah shallallahu 'alaihi wasallam said, 'The deeds most loved by Allah are those that are continuous (done) even if they are little.' He said; And Aisha, when she does a deed, she will persevere in it." (HR: Muslim)

This stage ensures that religious values are deeply rooted and institutionalized as the school's identity.

Evaluation of Religious Cultural Transformation

Evaluation acts as a strategic instrument to ensure that religious values remain effective and sustainable within the school environment. The evaluation process focuses on three key aspects:

1. Program Consistency

Program consistency is a critical component in the successful transformation of religious culture within educational institutions. This consistency involves the sustained implementation of initiatives, the engagement of all stakeholders, and structured, routine evaluations. Field findings at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng indicate that program evaluations are conducted at the end of each semester through reflective meetings involving the principal, ISMUBA teachers, homeroom teachers, and student representatives, including members of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM). These evaluations assess the effectiveness of religious programs, student participation levels, encountered obstacles, and necessary improvements for the following semester. This process reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that religious programs do not operate without clear oversight and continuous improvement. This finding aligns with Putri, who asserts that strengthening a quality culture in educational institutions is significantly influenced by transformational leadership and active participation from all stakeholders—teachers, students, and parents alike (Putri, 2024). The principal of SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng plays an active role in facilitating regular evaluations and fostering a culture of collaboration among teachers to reinforce the implementation of religious values.

Furthermore, Lisa emphasize that sustained alignment with a school's vision and mission is key to embedding a deeply rooted religious culture (Retnasari et al., 2021). This is evident in the involvement of non-ISMUBA teachers who support religious habituation by opening lessons with Qur'anic verses, facilitating moral reflections, and participating in activities like *Baitul Arqam*. Although some challenges persist—such as general subject teachers who perceive religious activities as outside their scope—ongoing dialogue and mentoring have shown promising progress in building shared understanding. In conclusion, continuous evaluation, institutional support, and the active engagement of all school components form a foundational triad for maintaining program consistency in religious cultural transformation. Within the framework of a child-friendly vocational school, such consistency not only strengthens students' religious values but also fosters a safe, inclusive, and morally exemplary learning environment—one that is essential for nurturing noble character alongside vocational competencies.

Regular semester evaluations involve all school elements. The consistent integration of Islamic values into all subjects and leadership commitment demonstrates that religious culture is embedded into the school's identity.

2. Participation and Acceptance

Participation and acceptance are essential components in realizing a child-friendly vocational school, particularly in the context of religious cultural transformation. At SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, this transformation would not be effective without the active involvement of students, educators, parents, and the broader school community. Students' active participation is evident in their engagement with various religious activities, which have now become embedded in the school's daily routines. They are not merely passive attendees but are involved as facilitators, such as leading the *morning Qur'an recitation*. Interview data reveal that although students initially felt awkward, consistent and rotational involvement has helped them grow more confident and comfortable. This indicates that religious cultural transformation positively impacts students' sense of belonging and the formation of their religious identity.

This condition aligns with Susanto, who argues that involving students in decision-making and program implementation enhances motivation, self-worth, and active participation in school life (Susanto, 2022). At SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng, student involvement is also reflected in the role of the IPM (Muhammadiyah Student Association), which serves as a platform for student voices in designing programs such as *Baitul Arqam* and other religious activities. This strengthens democratic and inclusive values—core principles of a child-friendly school. Teacher and parental acceptance also plays a significant role. Initially, some general subject teachers considered religious programs to be the sole responsibility of religious educators. However, through collaborative approaches, the school has gradually fostered a collective awareness that religious character-building is a shared responsibility. Many teachers now begin lessons with Qur'anic verses or moral reflections, signaling the integration of religious values into both vocational and general learning.

As Anwar et al. notes, parental and community support is a critical external factor in the success of child-friendly school programs (Anwar et al., 2023). SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng actively engages parents through regular meetings and reports on religious activities. Although not yet optimal, there is growing awareness of the need to strengthen synergy between values taught at school and those upheld at home.

Ultimately, systematic evaluation of participation and acceptance is crucial for the sustainability of the transformation. Evaluations involving students, teachers, and parents offer valuable data for policy decisions based on real needs. This is in line with Rahmanea and Rarasati, who state that the success of value-based programs depends greatly on how consistently all stakeholders are engaged (Rahmanea & Rarasati, 2024). By involving all parties in the evaluation process, SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng is building not only a structurally child-friendly school but also a culturally responsive environment. This dual approach supports the development of students' religious character within a vocational education ecosystem that demands competence, work ethics, and strong personal values.

3. Follow-Up and Sustainability

Ensuring the sustainability of religious cultural transformation in child-friendly vocational schools is a critical step to prevent the newly instilled values from fading and to foster their long-term development. This sustainability effort involves routine evaluations, consistent leadership support, parental and community involvement, and systematic long-term program planning.

Regular program evaluation is essential to assess implementation effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Erlanda et al., 2021). Involving teachers, students, and parents in the evaluation process not only enriches the findings but also strengthens collective ownership of the programs. The role of the principal as a transformational leader is pivotal in guiding and sustaining religious values in school life. Active leadership, including policy formulation and direct support in program execution, helps maintain consistency in the school's religious culture (Anjarrini & Rindaningsih, 2022). Furthermore, active participation of parents and the wider community—through joint programs, ongoing communication, and moral support—extends the influence of religious culture beyond the school setting (Susanto, 2022). thereby reinforcing a holistic character education framework. Additional reinforcement can be achieved through teacher training and the integration of religious values into thematic school activities, such as spiritually infused clean and healthy living programs (Mini Sariwulan, 2023). These serve as contextual applications of character

education relevant to the vocational school environment.

Finally, the formulation of a structured action plan, complete with achievement indicators and monitoring strategies, ensures that the transformation of religious culture proceeds systematically and adapts to the evolving needs of vocational students (Sugiyar, 2023). Through these efforts, religious values can continue to be deeply embedded as a core identity of child-friendly vocational schools. Long-term strategies include policy formulation, teacher capacity-building, thematic spiritual programs, and adaptive monitoring. The school's leadership plays a central role in ensuring the continuity of the spiritual atmosphere.

This corresponds with the Qur'an in Surah Al-Hasyr 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ١٨

It's means: "O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow—and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

(Qur'an, Surah Al-Hasyr: 18)

Thus, evaluation becomes a form of institutional self-reflection (*muhasabah*), ensuring that the transformation of religious culture continues in a reflective, adaptive, and contextual manner—supporting the development of a spiritually grounded, vocationally skilled, and child-friendly school.

CONCLUSSION | خاتمة

This study demonstrates that transforming religious culture is a foundational approach for developing a child-friendly vocational school environment at SMKS Muhammadiyah 2 Genteng. The planning phase showed that the school systematically reinforced its religious vision and designed programs that integrate Islamic values into vocational learning. Implementation, guided by Kurt Lewin's change model, successfully shifted the school from limited religious practices toward structured routines such as Qur'an recitation, congregational prayers, One Week One Hadith, and worship practice assessments. These activities fostered discipline, spiritual awareness, and ethical conduct among students. The refreezing stage ensured that these values became embedded in school policies and daily interactions.

Evaluation indicated consistent program execution, increased student engagement, and growing institutional acceptance, although broader teacher involvement remains an area for improvement. Overall, the transformation strengthened both the moral character and emotional well-being of vocational students, contributing to a safer, more inclusive, and value-oriented learning environment. The study concludes that integrating religious culture into vocational education effectively supports the development of technically proficient and ethically responsible graduates. Practically, vocational schools intending to adopt Kurt Lewin's change model should begin by strengthening a shared vision among school stakeholders before implementing religious or character-building programs. Changes should be introduced gradually through teacher role modelling, active student participation, and continuous evaluation to minimize resistance from students and teachers while fostering a collaborative and child-friendly school culture.

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