

Moral Responsibility and Self-Regulation in Character Education: Evidence from Draz's Quranic Ethics

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation in character education based on Muhammad Abdullah Draz's ethical framework, employing a mixed-methods design. Draz's ethical theory consists of several interrelated concepts, namely al-ilzâm (moral obligation), al-masûliyah (moral responsibility), al-nîyah (intention), al-juhd (moral striving), and al-jazâ (moral consequence). Among these concepts, the present study specifically focuses on al-masûliyah (moral responsibility) in relation to students' self-regulation within the context of character education. The quantitative phase involved students in several schools, where data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through correlation and regression analysis. The qualitative phase involved interviews to explore how moral responsibility is internalized and expressed in students' daily behavior. The quantitative findings indicate that moral responsibility has a significant positive effect on students' self-regulation. It suggests that higher levels of moral responsibility are associated with stronger self-regulatory capacities in learning and behavior. Supporting the result, the qualitative findings show that moral responsibility is developed through processes of reflection, habituation, and moral awareness within both classroom and

school environments. Overall, the principles of al-masûliyah (moral responsibility) and al-ilzâm (moral obligation) provide a robust conceptual framework for understanding character development, particularly in explaining how moral values shape students' self-regulated behavior in the educational context of schools. Thus, Draz's theory makes a significant contribution to the development of holistic, value-based character curricula and pedagogy that are responsive to contemporary social change.

Keywords: *character education; moral responsibility; muhammad abdullah drâz; selfregulations*

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Introduction

Character education has become an increasingly pivotal issue in contemporary education due to ongoing concerns regarding students' ethical behavior, self-discipline, and social responsibility (UNESCO 2021,7). Practically, the execution of character education takes various forms, such as through textbooks, classroom activities, curriculum design, behavioral habituation, exemplary conduct by teachers, and extracurricular programs. These approaches help embed values into both formal and informal learning contexts. Regardless of its extensive implementation, a persistent challenge remains—the gap between moral knowledge and consistent moral action. This condition highlights the need to examine the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation, since ethical behavior depends not only on value understanding but also on the capacity to regulate conduct in line with those values (Han 2018, 72).

Moral responsibility, moral identity, and self-regulation are closely interconnected in shaping character. Moral responsibility provides ethical direction, while self-regulation enables individuals to control impulses and maintain moral consistency. Empirical findings further indicate that moral identity strengthens self-regulation and that students with higher moral awareness demonstrate stronger self-control and better behavioral discipline (Orellana & Roth, 2024). When discussing about the importance of responsibility in character formation, they largely focus on implementation rather than its philosophical foundations (Cholimah et al. 2024, 584). The philosophy will define what morality means and how

it should be taught. Ignoring the philosophy, character education risks being misaligned with the institution's identity.

However, existing research is still dominated by Western psychological frameworks that emphasize individual autonomy and cognitive control, leaving limited attention to transcendental dimensions of moral responsibility (Harrison 2024). In Islamic ethical thought, Muhammad Abdullah Draz offers the concept of *al-masûliyah*, which expands responsibility beyond social and personal dimensions to include accountability before God. This transcendental accountability provides an internal moral mechanism that strengthens self-regulation even in the absence of external control (Draz 2017, 115-117). The uniqueness of Draz's framework lies in its emphasis on transcendental accountability (*masûliyah al-ilâhiyyah*). It is the belief that every human action is ultimately accountable before God. This transcendent dimension nurtures an internal moral consciousness that remains operative even in the absence of external supervision. It thereby provides a powerful foundation for self-regulation (Draz 2017, 118-122).

Nevertheless, despite growing research on moral identity, moral responsibility, and self-regulation, these constructs are generally examined within Western psychological frameworks. Little attention has been given to how Islamic ethical concepts, particularly Draz's notion of *al-masûliyah*, may contribute to understanding the moral foundations of self-regulation in educational settings. Existing studies on moral identity and self-regulation primarily focus on psychological mechanisms and moral motivation rather than religiously grounded ethical responsibility (Hardy & Carlo 2011). Another previous study on Muhammad Abdullah Draz has largely emphasized the philosophical and theological dimensions of his ethical thought (Ellemers et al. 2013, 24). Meanwhile, empirical efforts to operationalize his framework in educational contexts remain limited.

Draz's moral philosophy has been widely recognized as a comprehensive Quranic ethical system that integrates revelation, reason, and moral action. Scholars such as Hourani (1985) and Fakhry (1994) note that modern Islamic ethical thought, including Draz's contribution, emphasizes the harmony between divine command and rational moral agency. Furthermore, Izutsu (2002) emphasizes that Quranic ethics, as articulated by Draz and others, lies in an inner transformation of the individual, where moral values are absorbed into one's inner consciousness. However, these studies tend to examine moral

responsibility, moral identity, and self-regulation as separate constructs, rather than testing their interrelationships within a unified empirical model.

Therefore, this study examines the relationship between moral responsibility (*al-masûliyah*) and self-regulation among students through the lens of Muhammad Abdullah Draz's Quranic ethical theory. By integrating Islamic ethical philosophy with contemporary character education research, it seeks to develop a more holistic model of moral education that incorporates cognitive, social, and transcendental dimensions of human responsibility. It also offers an alternative framework for understanding self-regulation through the concept of divine accountability as a source of internal moral motivation and ethical consistency.

Research Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation in character education based on the ethical framework of Muhammad Abdullah Draz. This approach enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding, both through quantitative analysis to test relationships between variables and through qualitative exploration to uncover the underlying processes and meanings (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018, 5-6). The research adopts a sequential explanatory design, in which the quantitative phase is conducted first, followed by a qualitative phase to explain and deepen the statistical findings (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018, 77-78). The study was conducted in SDIT Al Fatah Model PTB, SDIT Lab School Al Fatah, and SMPIT Al Fatah, Bekasi, West Java, where they are considered representative in implementing Islamic values-based character education.

In the quantitative phase, the research subjects consisted of students in several schools, with a total population of 820 students. From this population, a sample of 100 students was selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria aligned with character education implementation. The inclusion criteria required participants to have actively participated in the school's character education programs for at least one academic year, ensuring sufficient exposure to the moral responsibility values examined in this study. The sample size was considered adequate for regression analysis and exceeded the minimum

requirement suggested for behavioral research involving predictive statistical models. Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to measure the levels of moral responsibility and students' self-regulation. The data were then analyzed using statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, to examine the relationships and predictive effects among variables (Sugiyono 2019, 147).

Afterwards, the qualitative phase was conducted through classroom and school culture observation and documentation, as well as interview with teachers and school administrators. They were selected purposively due to their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating character education programs. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, whereby additional interviews no longer generated substantially new information relevant to the research objectives. These data collection techniques were applied triangulatively to enhance data validity (Denzin 1978, 291).

The use of a mixed-methods approach in this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation in character education. The quantitative phase generates robust empirical evidence regarding the relationship and predictive influence between the two variables in a measurable and objective manner. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase uncovers the processes through which moral responsibility is internalized and manifested in students' everyday behavior within the school context. The integration is also expected to minimize the limitations inherent in each method, thereby producing findings that are not only generalizable but also contextually rich and meaningful. In this way, the study aims to offer a holistic account of the interplay between cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in students' character formation.

Results and Discussion

Statistical Evidence on Moral Responsibility and Self-Regulation

The quantitative analysis began with descriptive statistics to examine the general profile of students' moral responsibility and self-regulation. Descriptive measures, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated to determine the overall level of each variable among the respondents.

Table 1
Students' Level of Moral Responsibility and Self-Regulation

Variable	Mean	SD	Category
Moral Responsibility	4.401	0.466	High
Self-Regulation	4.222	0.578	High

Results in Table 1 provide an initial indication that students possess a strong sense of moral responsibility alongside a high capacity for self-regulation. To determine whether these two variables are empirically related, a Pearson correlation analysis was subsequently conducted.

The Pearson Correlation Analysis was meant to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation. The results presented in Table 2 show a strong positive relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation ($r = 0.709$). Students with higher levels of moral responsibility tend to demonstrate stronger self-regulatory capacities. The relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the observed association is unlikely to have occurred by chance and reflects a meaningful relationship between the two variables.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	R	p-value
Moral Responsibility - Self-Regulation	0.709	< 0.001

To further investigate the predictive effect of moral responsibility on self-regulation, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. This is intended to determine the extent to which moral responsibility contributes to variations in students' self-regulatory capacities.

Table 3
Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t	p-value	R^2
Moral Responsibility	0.881	10.364	<0.001	0.503

The regression analysis in Table 3 reveals that moral responsibility significantly predicts self-regulation. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.503$) shows that moral responsibility explains approximately 50.3% of the variance in students' self-regulation.

Taken together, the quantitative findings reveal a consistent pattern. Students reported high levels of both moral responsibility and self-

regulation, and the correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.709$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the regression results confirmed that moral responsibility is a significant predictor of self-regulation, accounting for 50.3% of its variance. These suggest that moral responsibility plays a substantial role in shaping students' capacity to regulate their behavior, supporting the proposition that moral responsibility serves as an important foundation for self-regulation in educational settings.

How Schools Cultivate Moral Values: The Four Approaches

The interviews reveal that schools of this study subject primarily fostered moral responsibility through four interrelated approaches: habituation, role modeling, religious activities, and school culture. This supports the argument that moral development is influenced not only by individual cognition but also by social and institutional environments that continuously reinforce moral expectations (Berkowitz & Bier 2004, 80).

Teachers consistently emphasized that moral responsibility is cultivated through structured daily routines. Students are expected to arrive on time, complete classroom duties, maintain cleanliness, perform congregational prayers, and fulfill academic obligations independently. Such routines create repeated experiences that gradually transform external rules into internal commitments.

"Students are trained to be responsible through daily routines. They learn that every task (worship, learning, and cleanliness), must be completed without waiting for constant supervision" (Adnan 2026).

Students reported that repeated exposure to daily routines encouraged them to monitor their own behavior and evaluate whether their actions were consistent with school values. As a result, responsibility becomes part of their daily conduct rather than merely a school requirement.

Students also stated that the presence of teachers is significant as moral exemplars. Teachers are expected to demonstrate discipline, honesty, consistency, and responsibility in their interactions with students. It means that character education will be ineffective if moral values are only taught verbally without being demonstrated in practice.

"We see our teachers coming on time, praying together with us, and keeping their promises. It makes us feel that we should do the same" (Dhiyaa, 2026).

That student's statement implies that internalizing moral values is significantly enhanced when students regularly observe these virtues modeled by adults at school environment.

Religious activities constitute another important dimension of character formation in schools. Daily congregational prayers, Quran recitation programs, Islamic studies, morning reflections, and regular religious mentoring sessions provide opportunities for students to connect moral behavior with spiritual accountability. A school leader stated,

"Students are continuously reminded that responsibility is not only toward teachers and parents but ultimately toward Allah. Such awareness inspires them to act responsibly even when no one is watching" (Saifullah, 2026).

These activities strengthen students' awareness of accountability before God (*al-muhāsabah*), which aligns closely with Draz's concept of *al-masûliyah*. Students frequently associated responsible behavior with religious obligations and personal accountability before Allah.

The findings further indicate that school culture plays a significant role in supporting moral development. Respectful communication, mutual assistance, discipline, collective responsibility, and positive peer interaction are consistently promoted throughout school life. Character values are embedded not only in classroom instruction but also in extracurricular activities, school regulations, and daily social interactions. One administrator noted,

"Character education is not a separate program. Its integration into school life allows students to experience these values constantly" (Aptena, 2026).

This value-oriented culture creates a social environment that reinforces responsible behavior and provides continuous opportunities for students to practice self-regulation. They internalize moral norms more effectively when schools provide coherent ethical practices, supportive relationships, and opportunities for moral participation.

When schools systematically embed moral practices into daily behavior, they move beyond mere cognitive instructions to structured affective integration. In Islamic educational theory, this mechanism aligns

with the concept of integrated character development, where the role of an educator goes beyond a standard instructor to a spiritual and moral guide (*murabbî*) who facilitates the alignment of outer actions with inner spiritual awareness (Irham & Basith 2018, 60). Furthermore, the institutional environment acts as a structural scaffold for student agency. When the school climate provides explicit and unified ethical narratives, it minimizes the moral cognitive dissonance often caused by external societal pressures. Students do not just learn rules; they co-construct an ethical identity within a supportive peer and mentor network (Lapsley 2015). Therefore, the internalization of moral responsibility requires a symbiotic relationship: the institutional environment provides the stable, value-rich "soil" through constant habituation, while the student's reflective capacity (*al-muhâsabah*) interiorizes these experiences, culminating in autonomous self-regulation (Nuccir 2017, 12).

The four approaches (habituation, role modeling, religious activities, and school culture) collectively foster the internalization of moral responsibility. Through these processes, students gradually develop awareness of accountability toward God, themselves, and others. This awareness functions as an internal mechanism of self-monitoring that guides behavioral choices and strengthens self-regulatory capacities. This study therefore encourages educational environments to foster moral identity and self-regulatory behavior. A positive school climate provides consistent moral norms, supportive relationships, and opportunities for ethical engagement that facilitate the integration of moral values into students' self-concepts (Aldridge & McLure 2023). As moral identity becomes increasingly internalized, students are more likely to act consistently with their moral commitments and demonstrate stronger self-regulation in their daily behavior.

Internalization of Moral Responsibility

Moral responsibility influences self-regulation through a process of internalized accountability. Students who develop a strong sense of responsibility toward God, themselves, and others tend to evaluate their behavior more carefully before acting. This internal evaluation functions as a self-monitoring mechanism that guides behavioral choices and helps students regulate impulses, emotions, and decisions. Thus, the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation is not merely

correlational but operates through a psychological process in which moral awareness becomes a source of behavioral control.

The analysis further revealed that moral responsibility is not merely understood at a cognitive level. Yet, it is embedded within students through a continuous process of value internalization supported by the school environment. Through religious practices, moral guidance, and social interactions, students internalize moral values as a part of their personal sense of responsibility and as a guide of their behavior. This finding is consistent with an argument that moral responsibility develops through a sustained process of value internalization fostered by educational environments, enabling moral values to function as internal guides for action (Mujtahid, 2016, 245-247). This is further backed by a recent study indicating that moral responsibility serves as an internal regulatory system. It encourages individuals to align their behavior with personally endorsed ethical standards, thereby strengthening self-control and behavioral consistency (Li & Wang 2025).

Moral responsibility is developed through the process of repeated experiences within the school environment (Hardy & Carlo 2011). Daily routines, classroom duties, collective worship, and peer interactions provide continuous opportunities for students to practice accountability in concrete situations. Over time, these habits transform external expectations into internal commitments. As students gradually perceive responsible behavior as part of their personal identity, they become increasingly capable of regulating their conduct without relying solely on external supervision. It helps explain why students with higher levels of moral responsibility demonstrate stronger self-regulation (Krettenauer & Hertz 2022), as they encourage themselves to behave consistently with their moral self-image (Orellana & Roth 2024, 6-10). This perspective reinforces that individuals who perceive self-control as a moral obligation tend to show greater resistance to impulses that conflict with their ethical commitments.

Moral responsibility functions as an intermediary mechanism through which moral commitment is translated into consistent moral action. Individuals engage in continuous processes of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and behavioral adjustment based on internalized moral standards (Bella 2024, 34). From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to contemporary character education by proposing that moral responsibility serves as a mediating bridge between moral commitment

and self-regulated behavior. While existing theories of moral identity and moral self-regulation generally emphasize cognitive and psychological dimensions, the present study highlights the significance of transcendental accountability as an additional motivational factor in moral development (Aquino & Reed 2002, 1425-1428).

Furthermore, longitudinal evidence suggests that self-regulatory competencies are closely associated with the development of prosocial behavior, empathy, and social responsibility throughout adolescence (Ritgens et al. 2024). Consequently, integrating Draz's ethical framework with contemporary moral psychology offers a more holistic explanation of moral agency. This approach encompasses the spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of human responsibility.

Practically, the findings imply that character education programs should not focus exclusively on teaching moral concepts. Schools need to create learning environments that facilitate the continuous practice of responsibility through habituation, reflective activities, role modeling, and meaningful participation in social life. Students develop stronger self-regulation when moral values are experienced as lived responsibilities rather than merely understood as abstract principles. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize strategies that encourage students to internalize accountability and translate moral understanding into consistent action.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the development of contemporary character education theory by reinforcing the relevance of Draz's ethical framework in explaining the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation. The study demonstrates that moral responsibility is not merely a normative ethical concept, but also a psychological and behavioral construct that significantly influences students' capacity to regulate their actions. Furthermore, integrating Draz's ethical thought with modern theories of moral identity and self-regulation provides a more holistic framework for understanding moral development in educational settings.

Overall, the qualitative findings demonstrate that the internalization of moral responsibility in students is achieved through a combination of habituation, role modeling, reflective practice, and institutional support. These elements collectively contribute to the development of students' self-regulation. It also confirms that character

education grounded in lived experience and structured guidance is effective in fostering morally responsible and self-regulated individuals.

Moral Responsibility as a Foundation of Self-Regulation

This study indicates that moral responsibility (*al-mas'ūliyah*) serves as a strong foundation for students' self-regulation. The quantitative results revealed a significant and positive relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation, with moral responsibility also emerging as a strong predictor of self-regulatory behavior. These results suggest that students who possess a higher sense of moral responsibility are more capable of controlling their behavior, emotions, and decision-making processes. This aligns with the argument that moral identity, moral responsibility, and self-regulation serve as internal motivational systems that facilitate behavioral regulation and ethical decision-making. Consequently, they form interconnected dimensions of character development, whereby individuals gradually transform external moral expectations into internally regulated patterns of behavior (Krettenauer & Stichter 2023, 399).

The strong predictive effect of moral responsibility on self-regulation found in the quantitative analysis may be explained by the increasing salience of moral identity. When moral values become central to one's self-definition, individuals are more likely to engage in both prescriptive moral regulation (promoting desirable actions) and proscriptive moral regulation (restraining undesirable actions). (Sonnentag et al. 2024, 432).

The qualitative findings further support this relationship by showing that moral responsibility functions as an internal mechanism of self-monitoring. Students who are aware of their responsibility toward God, themselves, and others tend to evaluate their actions before behaving. The awareness strengthens their ability to regulate impulses and maintain discipline. Thus, moral responsibility is not only a normative value but also a psychological foundation that enables consistent self-regulation in educational settings. Similar argument by (Sonnentag et al. 2024, 427) reveals that moral identity strengthens both prescriptive and proscriptive systems of moral self-regulation, enabling individuals to align behavior with internalized ethical standards.

Integrating both quantitative and qualitative findings, the study reveals that moral responsibility is not merely an outcome of moral instruction but develops through a dynamic process of identity formation

and virtue acquisition. Students repeatedly exposed to moral practices, ethical reflection, and religious guidance gradually transform external norms into internal dispositions that regulate their behavior. This is a proof that the acquisition of virtue depends upon continuous self-regulatory processes through which individuals learn to align their actions with internalized moral goals (Krettenauer & Stichter 2023, 400). In this perspective, moral responsibility becomes a motivational force that sustains behavioral consistency and moral growth over time.

Furthermore, research on adolescent moral development suggests that responsibility, conscience, and self-control are closely interrelated dimensions of character formation. They indicate that the cultivation of moral responsibility simultaneously strengthen students' capacity for self-regulation (Krettenauer & Stichter 2023, 399-401). Taken together, these findings reinforce the view that self-regulation is not solely an individual psychological skill but is nurtured through social and educational contexts that facilitate the internalization of moral values and the development of moral identity.

Mujtahid (2016) argues that moral responsibility is not merely acquired at the cognitive level but is cultivated through a continuous process of value internalization within educational environments. Through sustained moral habituation and religious guidance, ethical values become embedded within the individual and function as internal standards that guide behavior. Therefore, the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation identified in this study may be understood as the result of an ongoing process in which internalized moral values shape students' capacity to regulate their actions consistently and responsibly.

Draz's Ethical Framework and The Future of Character Education

This study extends conventional theories of self-regulation by integrating Muhammad Abdullah Draz's ethical framework. Existing psychological theories, such as social-cognitive theory and moral identity theory, generally explain self-regulation as a function of cognitive control, personal values, and self-concept integration. However, these frameworks often underemphasize the transcendental dimension of moral accountability.

In Draz's Quranic ethical framework, self-regulation is reinforced not only by personal values or moral identity but also by the awareness of

transcendental accountability. It is understood as responsibility before God, oneself, and society, creating a deeper motivational foundation for self-control and ethical behavior (Draz 2017, 115-120). From this study's findings, there is a conceptual mechanism linking *al-ilzâm*, *al-masûliyah*, and self-regulation. Moral commitment (*al-ilzâm*) encourages individuals to accept ethical obligations as personally meaningful principles. This commitment subsequently develops into moral responsibility (*al-masûliyah*), characterized by awareness of accountability for one's actions. Such awareness then motivates self-regulation, enabling individuals to align their behavior with moral standards even in situations where external control is absent. This mechanism provides a theoretical explanation of how Quranic ethics contributes to character formation beyond conventional cognitive approaches to moral education (Draz 2017, 120-130).

From Draz's ethical perspective, these findings suggest that self-regulation is not merely a cognitive process of behavioral control. It is also a manifestation of *al-masûliyah*, whereby individuals regulate their conduct based on a deeply internalized sense of responsibility. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings therefore supports this conclusion, that moral responsibility serves as a crucial foundation for the maturity of self-regulation within Islamic character education.

Draz's concept of *al-masûliyah* offers an expanded understanding of self-regulation. Within this framework, self-regulation is not merely a cognitive process of behavior control but a morally and spiritually grounded mechanism driven by *al-muhâsabah* (self-accountability before God). The qualitative findings support this view by showing that students regulate their behavior not only due to external rules or personal goals, but also due to an internal sense of divine oversight. It resonates with recent scholarship emphasizing that spiritual and religious commitments can strengthen self-regulation by providing transcendent sources of meaning and accountability (King & Boyatzis 2015).

Furthermore, the link between *al-ilzâm* (moral commitment), *al-masûliyah* (moral responsibility), and self-regulation provides a conceptual pathway for understanding moral development. Moral commitment encourages internal acceptance of ethical norms, which then develops into responsibility awareness, ultimately leading to consistent self-regulatory behavior. A similar developmental sequence is proposed by Han (2018), that moral commitment functions as a motivational bridge connecting

moral values to behavioral regulation through processes of identity formation and moral reflection.

By introducing *al-ilzâm* and *al-masûliyah* into the discourse of self-regulation, this study redefines the boundaries of autonomous agency in educational psychology. While mainstream psychological models focus heavily on individualistic autonomy, where the self is the ultimate arbiter of control, Draz's ethical framework presents a relational-transcendental autonomy. In this light, *al-muhâsabah* operates not as a restrictive external surveillance, but as an internal reflective mechanism that purifies intention (*an-niyyah*) and sustains moral effort (*al-juhdu*).

This ontological expansion matches discussion in Islamic ethics within modern institutional contexts. The study argues that current educational behavioral challenges cannot be resolved solely through technocratic regulations or administrative compliance. It must be grounded in an internal framework of moral accountability and personal sincerity (Rahmawati et al. 2025).

Consequently, self-regulation moves beyond being a merely cold and executive cognitive function. It transforms into a spiritual realization where a student's internal control is continually reinforced by a balanced approach to moral action. This synthesis requires targeted pedagogical approaches, such as value internalization, cognitive moral progression, and structured value clarification, to systematically build students' ethical autonomy within institutional settings (Zafi 2018).

There are several important implications for the future of character education through this study. First, character education should move beyond cognitive transmission of moral knowledge toward the development of moral responsibility as an internal disposition. The study shows that understanding moral concepts will be insufficient without internalizing them through experiences. Contemporary character education research likewise emphasizes that moral learning becomes effective when students are provided with opportunities to practice responsibility, reflection, and ethical decision-making in authentic contexts (Lapsley & Narvaez 2004, 54).

Second, schools should strengthen value internalization through integrated strategies such as habituation, role modeling, religious activities, and a consistent moral school culture. These elements collectively create an environment that supports the transformation of external norms into internal moral commitments. Research in character

education confirms that school-wide moral cultures significantly contribute to the development of self-regulation, empathy, and social responsibility among students (Berkowitz & Bier 2004).

Third, educators should recognize the importance of transcendental dimensions in moral development. Incorporating awareness of accountability before God can deepen students' moral motivation and strengthen their capacity for self-regulation. Overall, this study suggests that effective character education requires a holistic approach that integrates cognitive, behavioral, social, and spiritual dimensions. In this way, students are not only able to understand moral values but also to internalize and consistently enact them in their daily lives.

The practical execution of this holistic approach requires a systemic shift in how school cultures are designed and managed. To fully internalize *al-masûlîyah*, schools must move away from punitive discipline models toward environments saturated with shared meaning and collective ethical ownership. When religious practices such as collective worship are reduced to administrative checklists, their capacity to foster *al-muhâsabah* diminishes.

Therefore, rituals must be paired with structured moral dialogue and contemplative spaces that allow students to process the "why" behind their actions. Through this approach, core values like *amanah* (integrity) and *ikhlas* (sincerity) are transformed into practical, self-regulated virtues (Syamsidar & Khoiriyah 2026, 18). This shift transforms the school from a site of behavioral compliance into a living ethical ecosystem that effectively fosters professional *soft skills*.

Furthermore, global initiatives in contemporary character education indicate that the successful internalization of student virtues depends heavily on structurally sound transferring mechanisms and institutional support models within the school climate (Fernández Espinosa & Domingo 2025). Educators must therefore be trained not just as subject-matter experts, but as cultural architects who can connect academic discipline with transcendental purpose. Thus, it ensures that self-regulation becomes a sustainable lifelong virtue.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the relationship between moral responsibility and self-regulation in character education, grounded in the ethical framework of Muhammad Abdullah Draz as articulated in *Dustûr al-Akhlâq fî al-Quran*. Based on the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, several key conclusions can be drawn. First, the study shows that moral responsibility (*al-masûliyah*) is a central determinant of students' self-regulation in character education. Higher levels of moral responsibility are consistently associated with stronger self-regulatory behavior, indicating that self-regulation is grounded in internalized moral awareness rather than external control alone.

Second, the mechanism underlying this relationship operates through a process of internalization. Moral values are transformed into stable behavioral dispositions through habituation, role modeling, reflective practice, and a supportive school culture. Through these processes, external moral expectations are gradually internalized into personal commitments that function as internal standards for behavior regulation. Third, the findings further demonstrate that Draz's ethical framework provides a strong theoretical foundation for explaining this process. In particular, *al-ilzâm* (moral commitment) develops into *al-masûliyah* (moral responsibility), which then generates sustained self-regulation. This sequence clarifies how ethical obligations are transformed into lived behavioral practices. Finally, the principal contribution of this study is the positioning of *al-masûliyah* as a key explanatory mechanism linking moral commitment and self-regulation. By doing so, the study offers a more holistic framework for understanding character formation that integrates spiritual, psychological, and behavioral dimensions.

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