Developing a Muhasabah-Based Character Guidance Model for Juvenile Delinquency: A Qualitative Study in Indonesian Islamic Schools

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to develop and examine the implementation of a character guidance model based on the *muhasabah* (Islamic self-reflection) technique to address juvenile delinquency in Indonesian Islamic junior high schools. Employing a phenomenological approach, the research was conducted at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur over six months through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving six key informants (school administrators, counseling teachers, students with delinquent behavior, and parents). The findings reveal that juvenile delinquency manifests in interconnected forms rooted in ecological factors including emotional dysregulation, peer pressure, and insufficient value-based support systems. The study documents the successful operationalization of *muhasabah* into a structured, six-stage guidance process: rapport building, problem identification, guided self-monitoring, Islamic moral evaluation, commitment planning, and evaluation. This process facilitated positive outcomes including enhanced self-awareness, improved emotional regulation, strengthened spiritual motivation, and observable behavioral improvements among participants. However, the intervention showed contingent efficacy, being less effective for deeply habituated behaviors like smoking where social and physiological dependencies remained strong. Based on these findings, the study proposes a replicable *muhasabah*-based character guidance model that integrates Islamic counseling principles with systematic pedagogical stages. The research contributes to the literature on Islamic counseling by providing an empirical, process-oriented account of muhasabah in practice and offers practical insights for educators and counselors in Islamic educational settings seeking to foster character development through value-based interventions

KEYWORDS

Adolescent behavior intervention, Islamic character guidance, Islamic counselling, Juvenile delinquency, Muhasabah technique

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency remains a persistent and complex challenge within educational settings globally, with manifestations extending beyond rule-breaking to encompass emotional instability, violence, bullying, and substance abuse

(Syamsidar, 2020). In Indonesia, data underscores the severity of this issue. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded student brawls in 188 villages nationwide in 2021, with West Java reporting the highest incidence (Rizaty, n.d.). Further amplifying concern, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) documented 2,355 child protection violations by August 2023, many linked to school environments and exacerbated by socio-digital factors like learning loss post-pandemic and exposure to violent online content.

This phenomenon is acutely present in Islamic junior high schools (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah* or MTs). At MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur, delinquency manifests in behaviors such as truancy, smoking, fighting, and self-harm. This suggests a potential imbalance in educational focus, where intellectual development may be prioritized at the expense of holistic spiritual and moral formation (*tarbiyah ruhiyah*) (Makmudi et al., 2018). Such an environment calls for guidance interventions that transcend conventional disciplinary approaches by addressing the root causes within the students' inner dimensions (*nafsiyah*).

Literature Review

Juvenile delinquency, as a multifaceted psychosocial issue, has been widely examined through various disciplinary lenses, revealing its linkages to personal, social, and environmental determinants. Within educational psychology, school-based guidance and counseling (BK) is recognized as a primary institutional mechanism for early intervention and student support. Conventional BK frameworks focus on developmental and remedial approaches to address academic, personal, and social problems, with the aim of fostering adaptive behavior and academic continuity (Harita et al., 2022). However, critiques suggest that such secular frameworks may lack cultural and spiritual resonance in contexts where students' identities and moral reasoning are deeply embedded in religious values. This limitation has spurred the development of faith-integrated counseling paradigms, particularly within Muslim-majority settings such as Indonesia.

Islamic counseling emerges as a distinct approach that reconceptualizes guidance within a theistic worldview. Fundamentally, it is defined as a process of assisting individuals to live in accordance with divine guidance (*ḥudā*) to achieve well-being (*falāḥ*) in both worldly life and the hereafter (Ridwan & Kader, 2022). This ontological orientation shifts the goal of counseling beyond mere behavioral adjustment toward the cultivation of a God-conscious personality (*shakhṣiyyah Islamiyyah*). Specifically, Islamic character guidance (*bimbingan karakter*) is operationalized as a conscious, systematic effort by educators to shape students' morals (*akhlāq*), ethics, and noble character through methods grounded in the Quran and Sunnah, thereby enabling them to make ethically sound decisions in daily life (Lukluk Rohmatun Isnaini, 2016). A central construct within this paradigm is *nafsiyah* (intrapersonal) counseling, which emphasizes the internalization of Islamic teachings at the level of the self (*nafs*), focusing on purifying intentions, regulating inner states, and aligning behavior with faith-based principles (Kusnawan, 2020).

At the heart of *nafsiyah* counseling lies the practice of *muhasabah* (self-introspection or self-accounting). Derived from the Qur'anic imperative to hold oneself accountable before divine judgment, *muhasabah* is traditionally understood as a spiritual discipline of reflecting upon one's actions, intentions, and shortcomings in the sight of God (Syafri et al., 2020). Classical scholars such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah conceptualized it as a means of heart purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) essential for moral and spiritual growth (Makmudi et al., 2018). In contemporary counseling discourse, *muhasabah* has been reframed as a therapeutic technique that facilitates self-awareness, emotional regulation, and behavioral change through structured self-reflection. Practically, it is often integrated via Islamic rituals and cognitive practices, including prayer (*ṣalāh*), Quranic contemplation (*tadabbur*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), and supplication (*du'ā'*) (Rahmah, n.d.). These activities are designed to foster a state of mindfulness (*murāqabah*) and repentance (*tawbah*), which in turn can promote inner peace and reduce inclinations toward deviant behavior.

Empirical studies on religious-based interventions in Indonesian schools offer preliminary support for this approach. For instance, Lena (2019) demonstrated that a guidance program incorporating Quranic study and prayer routines contributed to positive behavioral changes among delinquent adolescents, including reduced truancy and smoking. Such findings align with the broader literature on the protective role of religiosity and spirituality against risk behaviors in youth. However, the evidence is not unequivocal. A contrasting study by Pujiastuti (2021) found no statistically significant relationship between self-reflection practices and self-control among young adults, suggesting that the efficacy of introspective techniques may be moderated by factors such as methodological implementation, sample characteristics, and the specific components of the intervention. This inconsistency highlights a critical gap: while *muhasabah* is theoretically valorized in Islamic counseling literature, there is a scarcity of rigorous, contextually grounded research that elucidates *how* it is systematically operationalized within a school's guidance ecosystem and *through what processes* it influences the attitudes and behaviors of adolescents exhibiting delinquency. Most existing discussions remain either theoretical or anecdotal, lacking detailed qualitative examination of its application stages, the roles of counselors and school systems, and the lived experiences of student participants. Therefore, a need exists for an in-depth, empirical exploration that moves beyond conceptual advocacy to document the practical integration, mechanisms, and nuanced outcomes of *muhasabah* as a structured character guidance technique in Islamic educational settings.

Research Gap

Despite this promising foundation, significant gaps in the literature remain. First, while the concept of *muhasabah* is established in Islamic literature, there is a scarcity of empirical, field-based research that qualitatively details its *structured application* as a character guidance technique within a formal school counseling program. Most discussions remain theoretical or anecdotal. Second, existing studies on religious interventions present conflicting evidence. For example, while Lena (2019) reported positive outcomes, other research found no significant effect

of self-reflection on self-control among young adults (Pujiastuti, 2021), indicating that effectiveness may be highly dependent on contextual factors, methodology, and population. Third, there is a lack of a clear, operational model that integrates *muhasabah* into the systematic stages of school-based counseling specifically tailored to address the spectrum of delinquent behaviors in an MTs setting. Previous work has not fully explicated the "how" of its implementation in a collaborative, school-wide manner.

Aims and Contribution

To address these gaps, this study aims to: (1) investigate the forms and contributing factors of juvenile delinquency at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur; (2) analyze the implementation process of a character guidance model using the *muhasabah* technique in that setting; and (3) develop a structured, Islamic counseling-based character guidance model grounded in the empirical findings.

Accordingly, this study offers a threefold contribution. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on *nafsiyah* counseling by providing empirical, qualitative data on the mechanisms through which *muhasabah* operates not just as spiritual reflection but as a tool for emotional and behavioral regulation. Practically, it proposes a replicable guidance model complete with objectives, methods, and stages, offering a concrete tool for BK teachers and Islamic counselors. Contextually, it provides an in-depth case study from an Indonesian MTs, contributing to the broader understanding of value-based interventions in non-Western educational and religious contexts.

METHODS

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design with a descriptive phenomenological approach, aimed at obtaining a deep, contextual understanding of the lived experiences related to juvenile delinquency and the implementation of a character guidance program rooted in the *muhasabah* technique. As field research, the investigation was carried out within the natural setting of MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur, Indonesia, over a period of six months. The phenomenological orientation was chosen to explore the "how" and "why" behind observable behaviors and institutional interventions, focusing on capturing the essence of the process and the meanings that participants ascribed to it, rather than seeking statistical generalization.

Data Sources and Collection Techniques

Data were triangulated from multiple sources to ensure credibility and depth. Participants were selected through an initial purposive sampling strategy, followed by snowball sampling to identify information-rich cases relevant to the research focus. The final cohort consisted of six key informants, selected based on the principle of data saturation, where subsequent interviews ceased to yield novel thematic insights. The informants included the Deputy Head of Student Affairs, who provided a managerial and policy perspective; one Guidance and Counseling

(BK) teacher directly responsible for implementing the character guidance program; three students identified by the school as exhibiting delinquent behaviors, with inclusion criteria encompassing observable engagement in emotional instability, bullying, truancy, smoking, or self-harm; and one parent of a participating student to provide a broader ecological perspective when relevant.

Data collection employed three primary techniques. First, in-depth, semi-structured interviews served as the core method, conducted individually in private settings using a thematic guide and lasting between 45 to 70 minutes; all interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Second, participatory observation allowed the first author to immerse in the school environment, documenting daily interactions, routines, and specific guidance sessions to capture non-verbal cues and practical applications. Third, a document analysis was performed on relevant school records, including disciplinary reports, the BK program curriculum, and counseling notes, to corroborate and contextualize data from interviews and observations.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed thematically using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves three concurrent, iterative processes: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis began with data condensation, where raw data from transcripts and field notes were systematically selected, simplified, and abstracted into initial codes ("peer pressure," "ritual of repentance"). These codes were then grouped into potential themes ("External Influences on Delinquency," "The Internalization Process through *Muhasabah*"). Subsequently, during the data display phase, organized summaries and thematic matrices were constructed to visually map relationships between codes and themes, facilitating further analytical refinement.

Finally, conclusion drawing and verification involved continuously checking emerging themes against the raw data, comparing perspectives across different informant groups, and using triangulated sources to confirm the robustness and credibility of the findings. This iterative process ensured that the conclusions remained firmly grounded in the empirical data.

Research Ethics

This study adhered to stringent ethical protocols to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant faculty ethics committee at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Informed consent was secured from all adult participants, including teachers, administrators, and parents, while parental consent and student assent were obtained for the adolescent participants, ensuring they understood the voluntary nature of their involvement and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained by using pseudonyms for all individuals and the institution in any published materials. All

audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely on a password-protected device and will be destroyed five years after the study's completion.

Furthermore, the researchers practiced reflexivity by consciously acknowledging their positions as Muslim academics with an interest in Islamic counseling, actively bracketing their preconceptions during data collection and analysis to minimize bias and present findings that faithfully reflect the participants' authentic experiences and voices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative analysis of data collected through interviews, observations, and documents at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur revealed a complex interplay between individual vulnerabilities, social dynamics, and the structured intervention of *muhasabah*-based character guidance. Three core thematic findings emerged, each detailing a critical dimension of the phenomenon under study.

The Multifaceted Nature and Ecological Roots of Juvenile Delinquency

Field observations and interviews revealed that delinquent behavior among students was not monolithic but manifested in interrelated forms, primarily categorized as academic negligence, substance use, interpersonal violence, and emotional dysregulation. Truancy was prevalent, with students frequently leaving classes without permission, often influenced by peer groups that normalized such behavior. As one BK teacher noted, *"Some students are easily provoked emotionally and have difficulty controlling themselves, especially in interactions with peers. Smoking and truancy often begin due to peer influence."* This peer dynamic was a recurrent catalyst, intertwining with personal factors such as weak emotional control and a lack of self-efficacy in resisting negative influences.

Furthermore, behaviors like verbal bullying and physical fights were often impulsive reactions to perceived slights, indicating underdeveloped conflict-resolution skills and empathy. The Deputy Head of Student Affairs contextualized these acts within the broader school climate, stating, *"Truancy and fighting significantly affect the learning atmosphere at school and hinder students' academic development."* This finding underscores that delinquency at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur is an ecosystem issue, rooted in the interaction between vulnerable individual predispositions, potent peer pressure, and a school environment struggling to provide consistent, value-based behavioral scaffolding.

To systematically capture the primary behavioral patterns and their perceived triggers, data from interviews with the BK teacher and students were synthesized. The following table summarizes the predominant forms of delinquency identified and the initial school response prior to the structured *muhasabah* intervention.

Table 1. Manifestations of Juvenile Delinquency and Initial Contributing Factors at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur

Form of Delinquency	Field Observations & Student Reports	Primary Contributing Factors
Truancy	Frequent unauthorized absence from class; gathering in school yard during lessons.	Boredom, low academic motivation, peer invitation, avoidance of certain teachers.
Smoking	Smoking in school bathrooms or surrounding areas; smell of smoke on uniforms.	Strong peer pressure ("ikut-ikutan"), curiosity, coping mechanism for stress, familial modeling.
Physical Fights/Brawls	Occasional physical altercations, often starting from verbal disputes or gang affiliations.	Inability to manage anger (*emosi tidak terkontrol*), need to defend honor/harga diri, influence of external peer groups.
Verbal Bullying	Mocking, belittling, and giving derogatory nicknames among students.	Low empathy, desire for social dominance, imitation of behavior seen in media or older peers.
Self-Harm Indicators	Signs of scratching or cutting; expressions of deep hopelessness in counseling sessions.	Severe emotional distress, inability to express or manage psychological pain, feeling of isolation.

As illustrated in Table 1, the behaviors are rarely isolated; truancy often facilitated smoking, and unresolved verbal bullying could escalate into physical fights. The "Contributing Factors" column highlights the ecological perspective, where personal vulnerabilities (emotional control) intersect with social triggers (peer pressure). This mapping was crucial for the BK teachers to tailor the subsequent *muhasabah* intervention, moving beyond generic reprimands to targeted self-reflection on specific actions and their moral-social consequences.

The Implementation Process: Muhasabah as a Structured, Value-Based Intervention

The implementation of character guidance using the *muhasabah* technique evolved from a general religious concept into a structured counseling protocol. This process was collaboratively developed by the BK teachers and school management, emphasizing a phased approach that integrated Islamic principles with practical counseling steps. The implementation followed a sequential yet flexible framework, beginning with building a trusting rapport (*rabitah*) between the counselor and the student, crucial for creating a safe space for honest self-disclosure. This was followed by a collaborative problem identification phase, where the student's specific delinquent behaviors (as cataloged in Table 1) were gently clarified using the *tabayyun* (clarification) method.

The core of the intervention was the guided *muhasabah* session. Here, students were led through self-monitoring and self-evaluation (*hisāb al-nafs*), reflecting on their actions against the benchmarks of Islamic morality. Counselors employed concepts of heart purification (*tazkiyat al-qalb*) from Ibn Qayyim's teachings, framing misbehavior as a symptom of a spiritually neglected heart. The methods of *al-hikmah* (wisdom) and *mau'idzah* (gentle admonition) were used to facilitate this introspection without inducing excessive guilt. Subsequently, students co-created a *self-discipline* plan with their counselor. This plan often included commitments to specific religious practices such as performing *ṣalāt al-*

hājah (prayer of need) when feeling tempted, engaging in regular *dhikr* for emotional calm, or setting aside time for daily self-reflection (*tafakkur*). The process concluded with scheduled follow-up *evaluation* sessions to assess progress, reinforce commitments, and adjust strategies. This structured application was pivotal; it transformed *muhasabah* from an abstract, intimidating command for self-accountability into a tangible, step-by-step tool for personal development, making the spiritual practice accessible and psychologically manageable for adolescents.

To visualize this structured process and its cyclical, reflective nature, the following conceptual framework was developed based on the field observations and counselor interviews.
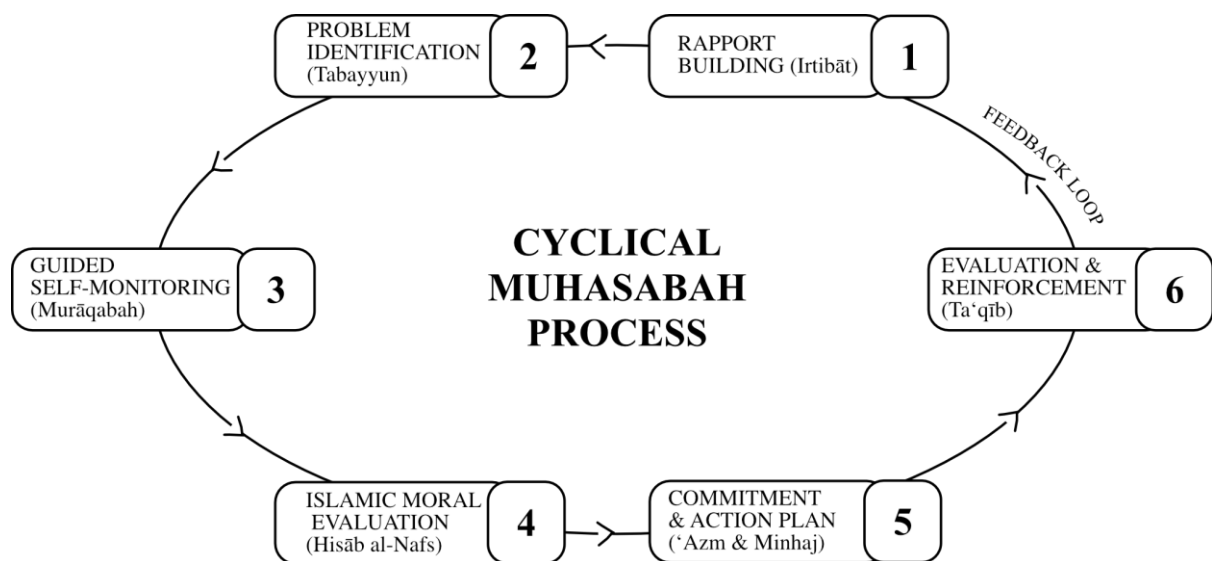

Figure 1. The Sequential Process of Muhasabah-Based Character Guidance

Figure 1 elucidates the non-linear, iterative nature of the guidance. The evaluation phase often leads back to renewed rapport building or problem re-identification, reflecting the realistic ups and downs of behavioral change. This framework underscores that *muhasabah* in practice is not a one-time event but a continuous, supported process of spiritual-ethical maintenance.

Outcomes and Contingent Efficacy of the *Muhasabah* Intervention

The intervention yielded a nuanced spectrum of outcomes, demonstrating its potential for fostering positive change while clearly revealing its limitations and dependencies. Positive shifts were observed across several interconnected domains. Firstly, students exhibited markedly enhanced *self-awareness* and cognitive reframing of their actions. They began to articulate the consequences of truancy not just as "skipping class" but as a neglect of their responsibility (*amanah*) as students and a waste of the opportunity to learn. Smoking was increasingly described not only as harmful to health but explicitly as a act that

"dirties the heart" and distances one from Allah. This cognitive shift represents the internalization of the *muhasabah* dialogue.

Secondly, improvements in *emotional regulation* were noted. Several students reported utilizing simple *dhikr* phrases learned during sessions as a "pause button" when feeling angry, preventing immediate aggressive reactions. A student involved in previous fights shared, *"Now when I feel hot-headed, I remember to say 'astaghfirullah' in my heart first. It gives me a moment to think."* Thirdly, participants frequently described a strengthened sense of *spiritual closeness (qurbah) to Allah*, which served as a powerful intrinsic motivator surpassing fear of punishment. This was evidenced by observed increases in voluntary participation in midday (*Dhuha*) prayers and Quran reading circles.

However, the efficacy of the intervention was contingent and non-uniform. A significant limiting factor was the persistent, countervailing power of the *peer environment* and *habituated addiction*, particularly regarding smoking. While the *muhasabah* sessions successfully instilled guilt and a desire to change, the immediate social pressure or physiological craving outside the counseling room presented a formidable challenge. One student's candid reflection encapsulates this conflict: *"I know it's wrong and I feel very guilty after we do the muhasabah together. But when my closest friends offer [a cigarette] during break time, and everyone is doing it, it's like my resolution melts away. I feel weak."* This highlights a critical insight: the *muhasabah* technique, while effective in building internal moral conviction and self-awareness, may be insufficient as a standalone intervention for behaviors reinforced by strong social or chemical dependencies. Its success is moderated by the intensity of external triggers and the availability of alternative, positive peer support systems. The intervention proved most effective for behaviors like impulsive fighting and truancy, where the decision-point was more individual and could be intercepted by heightened self-awareness. For smoking, it often led to increased internal conflict and guilt rather than sustained abstinence, indicating the need for a multi-component approach that addresses addiction more directly.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the discourse on Islamic counseling by empirically delineating how the classical concept of *muhasabah* is operationalized as a modern therapeutic technique and clarifying the conditions of its efficacy. The positive outcomes related to enhanced self-awareness, emotional regulation, and spiritual motivation resonate with and substantiate the findings of Lena (2019), who reported behavioral improvements through religious-based counseling. However, this study moves beyond merely confirming efficacy by unpacking the *mechanisms of change*: it demonstrates that *muhasabah* facilitates change not through fear but through a guided process of cognitive reframing (seeing actions through a moral lens) and by strengthening intrinsic spiritual motivation (*qurbah*). This addresses a gap in the literature where the "how" of Islamic techniques is often assumed rather than explained.

Furthermore, the study provides a crucial contextualization that helps reconcile contradictory findings in the literature, such as those of Pujiastuti

(2021), who found no significant effect of self-reflection on self-control. Our findings suggest that the *methodology of implementation* is a key differentiator. In this study, *muhasabah* was not a passive, solitary, or abstract activity; it was an active, dialogic, and structured process embedded within a supportive counseling relationship and reinforced by targeted religious practices (see Figure 1). This structured support system likely provided the scaffolding necessary for adolescents to translate reflective insights into behavioral control, a factor that may have been absent in studies reporting null effects. This positions the practice firmly within the theory of *nafsiyah* counseling (Kusnawan, 2020), successfully demonstrating the process of internalizing faith at the intrapersonal level to govern behavior.

However, the study also critically engages with the limitations of an exclusively intrapersonal approach. The persistent challenge of smoking despite successful *muhasabah* sessions underscores the powerful role of the social ecology and habit physiology. This insight is vital for the field of Islamic counseling, suggesting that while *muhasabah* is potent for moral and emotional development, it may need to be integrated into a broader, multi-systemic intervention model when addressing addictive behaviors or deeply entrenched peer-influenced conduct. It advocates for a more holistic *tarbiyah* (education) model where self-reflection is coupled with environmental engineering, such as creating positive peer groups (*ḥalaqah*) and involving families, to create a consistent value-based ecosystem.

Research Implications

The findings carry significant implications for theory, practice, and policy in Islamic education and counseling. Theoretically, this study enriches the Islamic counseling literature by providing an empirical, process-oriented model (Figure 1) that can be tested and refined in future research. It argues for the importance of "process studies" in understanding religious-based interventions. For practitioners the study offers a tangible, replicable blueprint. It implies that counselor training programs should include modules on facilitating *muhasabah* dialogues, moving from theory to skill development. For schools, it suggests the need to institutionalize time and space for such reflective practices within the school schedule and to foster a whole-school ethos that supports the values promoted in individual counseling sessions.

At a policy level, the findings advocate for the integration of structured, value-based character guidance programs into the national curriculum for Islamic schools, recognizing that spiritual-moral development (*akhlāq*) requires the same systematic planning as academic development. Furthermore, the identified limitation regarding peer influence calls for policy support in developing peer-mentoring programs and positive youth development activities within Islamic school settings to create a supportive social environment that reinforces, rather than undermines, the lessons of individual counseling.

Research Limitations

While providing in-depth insights, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the findings are based on a small, purposively selected sample within a single public madrasah (*MTs Negeri*) in West Java, Indonesia. The socio-cultural and religious dynamics of this specific setting may limit the transferability (*generalizability*) of the results to private Islamic schools, secular schools, or Islamic educational contexts in other Muslim-majority countries with different cultural norms. Second, the study's six-month timeframe, while sufficient for observing initial process and change, does not allow for assessment of the long-term sustainability of behavioral improvements. Whether the internalized values and self-regulation skills persist into later adolescence remains an open question.

Third, the research design, though employing triangulation, relied heavily on self-reported data and the researchers' interpretations. While reflexivity was practiced, the lead researcher's background in Islamic counseling inevitably shaped the focus and analysis. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track durability, use mixed methods to quantify changes in conjunction with qualitative depth, and ideally employ controlled or comparative designs to more rigorously isolate the effects of the *muhasabah* component from other concurrent influences. Expanding this research to diverse Islamic educational contexts would also help build a more robust and universally applicable theory of value-based character guidance.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the application of the *muhasabah* technique within a structured character guidance program to address juvenile delinquency at MTs Negeri 5 Cianjur. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research illuminated the complex ecological nature of delinquent behaviors driven by a confluence of personal emotional volatility, potent peer influence, and environmental factors. In response, the study documented the successful operationalization of *muhasabah* from a theological concept into a systematic, multi-stage counseling process. This process, involving rapport building, guided self-monitoring, Islamic moral evaluation, and commitment planning, proved effective in fostering students' self-awareness, enhancing emotional regulation, and strengthening spiritual motivation, leading to observable positive behavioral shifts.

However, the research also delineated the contingent efficacy of this approach, revealing its limitations in overcoming deeply habituated behaviors like smoking, where social and physiological dependencies posed significant challenges. The primary contribution of this study lies in its empirical demonstration of the "how" providing a detailed, replicable model for Islamic counseling practitioners and highlighting that the technique's success hinges on structured implementation within a supportive guidance relationship. Ultimately, while *muhasabah* serves as a powerful core technique for moral and emotional development rooted in Islamic psychology, its impact is maximized when integrated into a broader, holistic educational strategy that also addresses the

social ecology of the adolescent. This study thus advocates for the intentional design of character guidance programs in Islamic schools that blend deep self-reflection with proactive environmental support to cultivate resilient, ethical character in students.

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AI USAGE DECLARATION

The authors declare that artificial intelligence tools were used responsibly during the preparation of this manuscript. Consensus AI was employed as a supplementary tool to identify relevant academic references and literature related to Islamic counseling and juvenile delinquency. Additionally, Grammarly was used for proofreading and improving the clarity and grammatical accuracy of the manuscript. All content, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions remain the original work of the authors, and AI tools were used solely for supportive and non-generative purposes.

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