

DAUD'S FASTING HABITUATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DELAYED GRATIFICATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENT

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Abstract

This study aims to examine students' experiences in practicing the fast of Daud and its implications for delayed gratification skills from an educational psychology perspective. The study employed a qualitative, descriptive phenomenological approach at the Al-Mumtazah Muhammadiyah Modern Islamic Boarding School in Ajibarang, with purposively selected subjects. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological model. The results indicate that the fast of Daud is interpreted as a means of self-control, discipline, and spiritual closeness. This practice fosters the ability to delay gratification, control emotions, and increase responsibility for learning. The findings also indicate that the success of the practice is influenced by internal motivation and support from the Islamic boarding school environment. This study confirms that the fast of Daud contributes to the development of student self-regulation and is relevant as an experiential character learning model in Islamic education.

Keywords: *Fast of Daud; Delayed Gratification; Self-Regulation; Educational Psychology; Phenomenology*

A. Introduction

The development of the digital era and globalization has significantly influenced the behavioral patterns of the younger generation, particularly in terms of self-control and future orientation. The widespread access to instant entertainment, social media, and rapid digital consumption has encouraged more impulsive behaviors oriented toward immediate gratification. In this context, the ability to regulate oneself and delay gratification becomes increasingly crucial for academic success and character development (Romer, Duckworth, Sznitman, & Park, 2010). From a theoretical perspective (*das sollen*), education aims to develop individuals with strong self-regulation, including the ability to delay gratification in pursuit of long-term goals. This ability is considered a key indicator of psychological development and is closely associated with academic achievement, decision-making, and behavioral control (Hofmann et al., 2017).

However, empirical evidence (*das sein*) indicates that this capacity remains a challenge among adolescents. Studies show that teenagers tend to exhibit higher

impulsivity and a preference for immediate rewards, which is partly influenced by the imbalance between cognitive and emotional development systems (Huang, Hu, & Li, 2017).

In the Indonesian context, low self-control has been shown to correlate with increased impulsive behaviors, such as impulse buying and excessive media consumption. A study involving 509 adolescents found that self-control plays a significant role in reducing impulsive tendencies. Similarly, low self-control has been linked to addictive behaviors, such as binge-watching, which negatively affect productivity and mental well-being (Abwa Fitri, 2023). This phenomenon shows that there is a gap between educational expectations in forming disciplined character and the reality of student behavior which still tends to be impulsive. In other words, there is a gap between *das sollen* in the form of the ideal of character formation through education, and *das sein* in the form of real conditions that indicate weak self-control abilities in students.

In the context of Islamic education, one approach that is believed to be able to bridge this gap is through the habit of worship. The practice of worship not only functions as a ritual obligation, but also as a means of direct learning (experiential learning) in forming character and self-control. Fasting, in particular, is a form of exercise that systematically trains individuals to restrain biological and emotional urges for a certain period of time.

Fasting has a strong psychological dimension because it involves a conscious and repeated process of self-control. In practice, individuals who fast are required to resist hunger, thirst and other emotional impulses, which indirectly trains self-regulation abilities. In psychological studies, exercise done consistently and repeatedly has been proven to be able to strengthen an individual's self-control abilities.

One form of sunnah fasting that has the characteristics of continuous practice is Daud fasting, namely fasting that is done alternately (one day you fast and one day you don't). This pattern provides an opportunity for individuals to continuously practice self-control over the long term, so it has the potential to be more effective in forming habits and character than temporary practices.

However, studies that specifically examine the relationship between Daud's fasting habit and self-control abilities, especially within the framework of educational psychology, are still relatively limited. Most studies emphasize the normative or health aspects of fasting, while the dimensions of students' subjective experiences in carrying out this practice have not been explored in depth.

In fact, subjective experience (lived experience) has an important role in the value internalization process. Individuals not only learn from what is taught, but also from what is experienced directly in everyday life. Therefore, a phenomenological approach is relevant to understand how Daud's experience of fasting can actually shape students' self-control abilities.

Based on this description, this research departs from the gap between *das sollen* in the form of the hope that education and religious practices are able to shape students' self-control abilities, and *das sein* in the form of reality which shows that these abilities are still

weak in students. Therefore, this research aims to examine in depth the students' experiences in carrying out Daud's fasting habit and how this experience contributes to the formation of self-control abilities from an educational psychology perspective.

It is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of psychological studies of Islamic education, especially in integrating the practice of worship as a medium for experience-based character learning. Apart from that, practically, the results of this research are expected to be a reference for educational institutions in designing character development programs that are more contextual, applicable and sustainable.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive phenomenological design to explore students' subjective experiences in practicing Daud fasting and its relation to *delayed gratification* from an educational psychology perspective. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences while minimizing excessive interpretative bias (Moustakas, 1994).

The research was conducted at the Al-Mumtazah Muhammadiyah Ajibarang Modern Islamic Boarding School, where Daud fasting is implemented as part of a structured character development program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018), including students who have consistently practiced Daud fasting for at least three months, are actively enrolled, and are willing to participate as informants.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences, motivations, and perceived impacts of fasting, while observations focused on students' daily behaviors within the boarding school environment. Documentation was used to support the data through institutional records and program archives. Triangulation of data sources and methods was applied to enhance the validity of the findings (K. Denzin, 2017).

Data analysis followed Moustakas' phenomenological procedures, including epoche, horizontalization, clustering of meanings, and the development of textural and structural descriptions, culminating in the synthesis of the essence of experience. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility (member checking), as well as transferability, dependability, and confirmability achieved through systematic auditing of the research process (Moustakas, 1994).

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

Based on the results of data analysis through the process of reduction, categorization, and finding meaning using a phenomenological approach, a number of main themes were obtained that represent students' experiences in carrying out Daud's

fasting habit. These themes are arranged systematically based on the similar meanings of the informants' statements as well as the results of interpretations of the lived experiences they have experienced. The following presentation in table form aims to provide a more structured and comprehensive picture of the research findings, making it easier for readers to understand the relationships between the resulting themes.

Table 1 Research Findings Themes on the Habitual Practice of Dawud Fasting

No	Main Theme	Subthemes	Description of Findings
1	Meaning of Dawud Fasting	Spiritual Meaning	Perceived as a means of strengthening closeness to God and enhancing spiritual awareness
		Self-Control	Viewed as a practice of restraining desires (hunger, emotions, and immediate impulses)
2	Habituation Process	Adaptation Phase	Students initially experience physical and psychological challenges in practicing the fast
		Internalization Phase	The practice gradually becomes a habit performed without external pressure
3	Development of Delayed Gratification	Resisting Immediate Rewards	Students demonstrate the ability to delay gratification, such as refraining from eating and drinking
		Emotional Regulation	Students show improved emotional control and reduced impulsivity
4	Behavioral Impact	Discipline	Improvement in time management and learning responsibility
		Focus and Self-Regulation	Increased concentration and better control over daily activities
5	Supporting and Inhibiting Factors	Supporting Factors	Boarding school environment, peer support, and teacher guidance
		Inhibiting Factors	Physical fatigue, dense schedules, and external environmental influences

The meaning of Daud's fast for students

Based on the results of interviews conducted, it was found that students interpreted Daud's fast not only as a sunnah worship, but also as a means of self-formation which includes spiritual and psychological aspects. This meaning is formed through repeated experiences in daily life in the Islamic boarding school environment.

In the initial stages, some students observed Daud's fast due to external factors, such as recommendations from the ustadz and the Islamic boarding school environment. This is as expressed by one informant:

“At first I fasted because I followed my friends and ustadz's advice, I didn't really understand the benefits...”

However, as time goes by, students begin to feel changes in themselves, especially in terms of self-control and emotional calm. As stated by another informant:

“If you fast often, you feel like you can control your emotions better and become calmer...”

This finding shows a shift in meaning from what was originally normative to a more reflective meaning. In a phenomenological perspective, experiences that are lived repeatedly (lived experiences) will form a new awareness within the individual, thus giving birth to a deeper meaning to the practice carried out (*Dodgson, 2023*).

Apart from that, students also interpret Daud's fasting as a form of training for consistency and personal commitment. This can be seen from how they try to maintain regular fasting, even though they face various challenges. One informant stated:

“The most noticeable thing is that you become more disciplined, because if you have the intention to fast you have to carry it out, so you carry over to other activities too...”

This statement shows that success in fasting consistently provides a sense of achievement which has an impact on other aspects of life, such as study discipline and time management. In the study of educational psychology, this is related to the ability of self-regulation, namely the individual's ability to control behavior and direct actions consciously to achieve certain goals in the learning process (*Panadero, 2017*).

Furthermore, students also linked Daud's fasting with improving spiritual qualities, such as feeling closer to God and being better able to control his passions. Thus, fasting is not only seen as physical activity, but as a means of ongoing psychological training that has an impact on the formation of students' character.

From a modern psychological perspective, this experience is in line with the concept of Delayed Gratification, namely the ability to delay momentary gratification in order to achieve long-term goals. The practice carried out through Daud's consistent fasting allows students to develop this ability through real experiences in everyday life (*Bolasco, 2020*).

Thus, the meaning of Daud's fast for students develops from just an obligation to internal awareness as a means of character formation, especially in the aspects of self-control, discipline and spiritual closeness.

Habituation Process as Self-Control Exercise

Based on the research results, Daud's fasting habituation process for students did not occur instantly, but went through stages involving physical, emotional and cognitive adaptation. This habit takes place gradually until it eventually becomes part of the routine that is internalized in students' daily lives.

In the early stages, some students expressed difficulties in fasting consistently, especially in resisting hunger, fatigue, and the temptation not to continue fasting. This is as stated by one informant:

“In the beginning it was hard, especially if you were tired and saw other friends not fasting, you felt like not fasting too...”

This statement shows that in the initial phase, students are still in the adjustment stage, where internal and external forces are still quite strong in influencing their behavior. However, as time goes by, students begin to adapt and find ways to maintain these habits. As expressed by another informant:

“If you get used to it, it actually feels light, like it has become a habit that must be carried out...”

These findings indicate that Daud's habit of fasting functions as a repeated training process in forming self-control. In a phenomenological perspective, experiences carried out continuously will form new awareness that is internalized within the individual (Douven, 2021).

Apart from that, students also begin to develop personal strategies for fasting, such as arranging rest times, reducing activities that are too strenuous, and maintaining consistent intentions. One of the informants stated:

“I usually organize my activities so that I don't get too tired, so I can still fast smoothly...”

This shows the development of self-regulation abilities, where students not only fast, but are also able to manage their condition so that they remain consistent in carrying out this worship. In psychological studies, this ability is related to the process of self-regulation, namely the individual's ability to consciously direct behavior to achieve certain goals (Inzlicht et al., 2021).

Furthermore, at a more advanced stage, Daud's habit of fasting was no longer felt as a burden, but had become part of his personal needs. Students begin fasting with full awareness without any external pressure. This is reflected in the following statement:

“If you don't fast, you feel like something is missing, so it becomes your own need...”

This statement shows that the habituation process has reached the internalization stage, where behavior that was initially carried out due to external encouragement turns into an internal need. In this context, Daud's fasting not only functions as worship, but also as a means of continuing to exercise self-control.

In a modern psychological perspective, this process is in line with the concept of Delayed Gratification, where individuals learn to delay gratification through consistent practice. Habits that are carried out repeatedly are proven to be able to strengthen an individual's ability to control momentary impulses and maintain behavior that is oriented towards long-term goals (Trepanowski & Bloomer, 2020).

Thus, Daud's fasting habituation process in this study shows clear stages, starting from the initial difficulty phase, adaptation, to internalization. This stage confirms that the formation of self-control in students is the result of a continuous training process and is supported by a conducive educational environment.

The Experience of Delaying Gratification in Daud's Fasting Practice

Based on the research results, Daud's experience of fasting provides space for students to practice the ability to delay gratification in everyday life. This experience is not only related to resisting hunger and thirst, but also includes controlling emotional impulses, momentary desires, and various distractions that arise in daily activities.

In the initial stage, students revealed that resisting the urge to eat and drink was the main challenge in fasting. This is as stated by one informant:

“During the day it's the hardest thing to endure hunger, especially when you see food or other friends eating...”

However, the experience developed into a broader exercise in self-control. Students begin to realize that fasting not only restrains physical needs, but also trains the ability to control emotions and behavior. As expressed by other informants:

“Apart from holding back my hunger, I am more able to control my emotions and don't get angry easily...”

These findings indicate that Daud's fasting experience contributed to the development of comprehensive self-control. In a phenomenological perspective, repeated experiences will form a new awareness that is internalized within the individual through reflection on the experience (Dodgson, 2023).

Furthermore, students also showed changes in the way they determine activity priorities. One informant stated:

“When I'm fasting, I prefer to finish my assignments first rather than play...”

This indicates that the experience of delaying gratification has an impact on the ability to make decisions that are more rational and long-term oriented. In educational psychology studies, this ability is related to self-regulated learning, namely the individual's ability to control the learning process, set goals, and manage behavior to achieve optimal results (Panadero, 2017).

Apart from that, Daud's consistent training through fasting also contributed to the formation of more stable behavior patterns. Students become better able to control momentary impulses and direct their behavior in a more controlled manner in various activities. This was stated by one of the informants:

“If you are used to fasting, it will be easier to resist the urge to do things that are not important...”

These findings indicate that repeated practice through Daud's fasting contributes to strengthening self-control and stability of students' behavior in everyday life.

From a modern psychological perspective, this experience is in line with the concept of Delayed Gratification, namely the individual's ability to delay momentary gratification in order to achieve long-term goals. David's fasting in this case functions as a concrete and sustainable training medium in developing these abilities through direct experience (Trepanowski & Bloomer, 2020).

Thus, the experience of delaying gratification experienced by students through Daud's fasting not only has an impact on the spiritual aspect, but also forms the ability to self-regulate, make decisions, and have more focused behavior in everyday life.

Daud's Fasting as a Worship Practice and Its Implications for Student Behavior

Based on the research results, Daud's habit of fasting not only provides spiritual experiences for students, but also has a real impact on changing behavior in everyday life. These changes can be seen in the aspects of discipline, emotional control, and responsibility for learning activities.

Conceptually, fasting in Islam is a form of worship that not only has a ritual dimension, but also contains educational and psychological value. Fasting, including sunnah fasting, has a positive relationship with an individual's self-control ability. (Hasanah, Kusnadi, & Marianti, 2023) Fasting teaches individuals to refrain from various impulses, both physical and emotional, so that it functions as a means of forming morals and self-control. In this context, David's fasting as a form of sunnah fasting that is carried out consistently becomes a more intense training medium in forming individual character. In the perspective of Islamic psychology, fasting is understood as a process of cultivating the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) which plays a role in controlling desires and forming individual self-control. This is in line with research findings which show that the practice of fasting contributes to the formation of self-control and emotional stability in students (Vitriani & Arifi, 2026).

In a modern scientific perspective, the practice of religious fasting has also been studied as a form of self-control exercise that has an impact on psychological balance and individual behavior. Research shows that the practice of fasting is associated with increased self-control and the ability to manage emotions and behavior more adaptively (Trepanowski & Bloomer, 2020).

In this research, students revealed that David's habit of fasting had an influence on their discipline in carrying out daily activities. This was stated by one of the informants:

"When I get used to fasting, I become more organized, wake up earlier and don't procrastinate on work..."

This statement shows that practicing self-restraint in fasting has an impact on students' ability to manage time and carry out responsibilities more consistently. Discipline is formed not only in the context of worship, but also extends to academic activities and daily life.

Apart from that, Daud's fasting also had an impact on controlling students' emotions. This is as expressed by other informants:

"If I fast, I feel like I can control my anger better and am less irritable..."

These findings indicate that fasting functions as a means of training emotional regulation. In an Islamic psychology perspective, this condition is related to the individual's success in controlling impulsive internal drives through continuous spiritual practice (Vitriani & Arifi, 2026). Meanwhile, in modern psychology, this ability is understood as part of emotional regulation which is an important component in the development of individual self-control (Panadero, 2017).

Furthermore, students also experience increased responsibility in learning activities. They become more focused and are able to reduce impulsive behavior. As stated by one of the informants:

“I became more focused on studying and not playing too much...”

This shows that Daud's habit of fasting contributed to the formation of more focused and productive behavior. In the educational context, this condition reflects the development of self-regulation abilities which play an important role in supporting student learning success.

In empirical studies, the practice of fasting has also been proven to have a positive impact on individuals' physical, mental and spiritual aspects, including increasing self-control and psychological balance (Trepanowski & Bloomer, 2020). Thus, Daud's fasting in this research not only functions as spiritual worship, but also as an effective character education instrument.

In line with modern psychological perspectives, the behavioral changes experienced by students can be understood as the result of consistent self-control training. The practice of Daud fasting serves as a concrete medium for developing *delayed gratification*, which contributes to personal discipline and academic responsibility. This habituation demonstrates a strategic role in shaping disciplined, emotionally stable, and responsible behavior, making it relevant as a model of character education within the Islamic boarding school context.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Daud's Fasting Habit

The sustainability of students' fasting practices is influenced by the interaction between internal and external factors, which collectively determine behavioral consistency.

1. Supporting Factors

A conducive boarding school environment plays a central role in reinforcing students' consistency. The presence of peers who engage in similar practices provides social reinforcement, as reflected in the following statement:

“At the Islamic boarding school, many friends are also fasting, so they are more enthusiastic and don't feel alone...”

In addition, the role of teachers (*ustadz*) in providing motivation and guidance supports the internalization of religious values:

“Ustadz often gives motivation about fasting, so you become more confident and enthusiastic about doing it...”

Internal factors are also crucial, particularly intrinsic motivation. Students with strong personal intention tend to be more consistent, indicating that sustained behavior is largely driven by internal awareness (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

2. Inhibiting Factors

Students also face several challenges in maintaining fasting practices. Physical fatigue and limited energy are common obstacles, especially during periods of intensive activity:

“If there are many activities and you feel tired, sometimes it becomes difficult to continue fasting...”

Environmental changes, such as returning home during holidays, also reduce consistency due to the lack of structured support. In addition, short-term impulses—such as the desire to rest or engage in less productive activities—pose challenges in maintaining commitment to long-term goals.

3. Synthesis Analysis

Overall, the findings indicate that the success of Daud fasting habituation is shaped by the interaction between individual motivation and environmental support. From an educational psychology perspective, this reflects the development of self-regulation through repeated practice within a supportive context.

Thus, Daud fasting can be understood not only as a religious ritual but also as a structured learning process that fosters self-control and sustainable character formation among students.

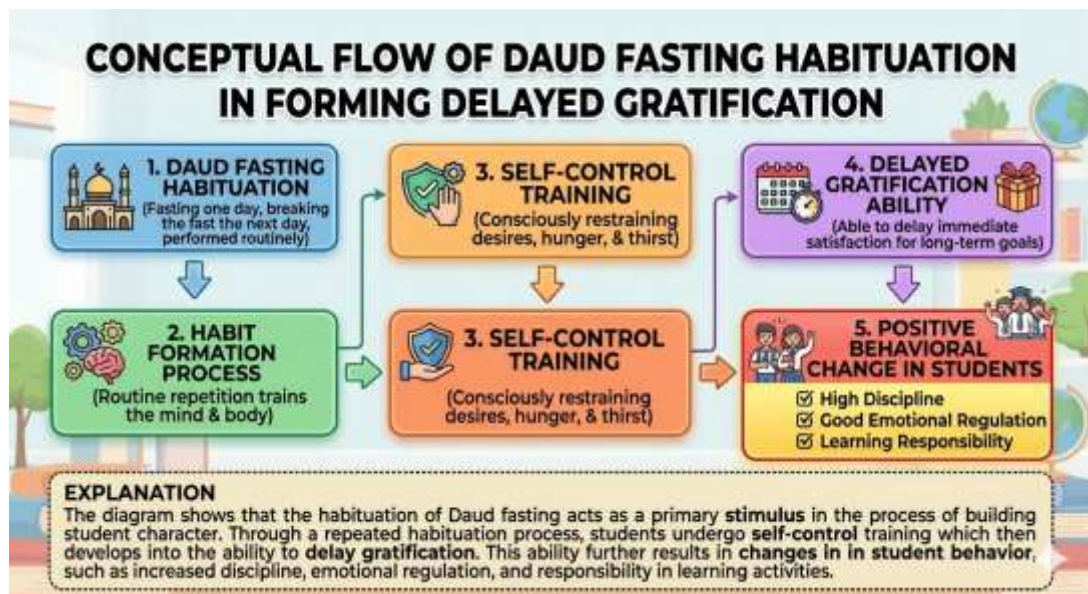


Figure 1. Conceptual flow of Daud's fasting habit in forming delayed gratification

2. Discussion

Based on the overall research findings, Daud's habit of fasting among students shows that the practice of worship not only has a spiritual dimension, but also contributes significantly to the formation of psychological abilities, especially in the aspects of self-control and behavioral regulation. A synthesis of previous findings shows that there is a close relationship between religious experience, the process of habituation, and the development of self-regulation abilities in the educational context.

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close relationship between religious experience, the process of habituation, and the development of self-regulation abilities in the educational context.

In the Meaning of Daud's Fasting for Students, it was found that students interpreted Daud's fast as a means of self-formation which involved aspects of self-control, spiritual closeness, and character formation. This meaning is then strengthened in the Habituation Process as Self-Control Exercise, which shows that the process of getting used to fasting takes place gradually through the adaptation to internalization phases. Furthermore, in the experience of delaying gratification in Daud's fasting practice, the experience of delaying gratification becomes the core of the process, where students learn to control momentary impulses and direct behavior towards long-term goals.

These findings are strengthened by the implications of Daud's fasting on student behavior, which shows that the habit of Daud's fasting has a real impact on student behavior, such as increasing discipline, emotional stability, and responsibility in learning. Meanwhile, in the Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Daud's fasting habit, it was identified that the success of this habit was influenced by internal factors (intention and motivation) and external factors (Islamic boarding school environment and the role of educators).

Overall, the results of this research indicate that Daud's fasting can be understood as a practice-based educational process that integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions in the formation of student character. In this context, fasting not only functions as a ritual worship, but also as a learning medium that allows students to directly experience the process of self-control in everyday life.

From an educational psychology perspective, these findings confirm that Delayed Gratification and self-regulation abilities can not only be developed through a cognitive approach, but also through consistent religious practices. This is in line with studies which show that self-regulation is an ability that develops through interactions between experience, environment and repeated practice (Panadero, 2017).

Apart from that, this research also contributes to the development of psychological studies of Islamic education, especially in understanding the practice of worship as an instrument for character formation. In this case, Daud's fasting can be positioned as a value-based learning model that not only emphasizes cognitive aspects, but also affective and behavioral aspects in an integrative manner (Vitriani & Arifi, 2026).

Furthermore, these findings have practical implications for educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools, in developing character development programs based on the habit of worship. Integration between religious practices and educational psychology approaches can be an effective strategy in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has strong self-control abilities.

Thus, this research confirms that Daud's habit of fasting is a form of educational practice that has great potential in developing students' holistic self-regulation abilities. This contribution is important in enriching the study of the psychology of Islamic education as well as opening up space for further, more in-depth research related to the integration between religious practice and individual psychological development.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of phenomenological research regarding Daud's fasting habit in forming students' delayed gratification abilities at the Al-Mumtazah Muhammadiyah Ajibarang Modern Islamic Boarding School, it can be concluded that Daud's fasting practice is not only understood as a ritualistic Sunnah worship, but also as a character education process that has a significant psychological impact on the development of students' self-control.

First, the meaning of Daud's fast for students develops gradually from external obedience to internal awareness. At first, fasting was understood as an obligation that must be carried out, but with repeated experiences, students began to interpret it as a means of self-training to increase patience, discipline and self-control.

Second, Daud's process of getting used to fasting shows the existence of adaptation stages which include the initial difficulty phase, adjustment, and internalization of the habit. This process shows that the formation of self-control behavior does not occur instantly, but rather through consistent practice in a conducive educational environment.

Third, the experience of delaying gratification experienced by students in carrying out Daud's fast reflects the formation of increasingly mature self-regulation abilities. Students are not only able to withstand physical needs such as hunger and thirst, but also control emotions, impulsive behavior, and short-term daily decisions.

Fourth, Daud's habit of fasting has a positive impact on student behavior, both in emotional, social and academic aspects. Students become more disciplined, better able to control their emotions, and more focused in making decisions and managing learning activities.

Fifth, the success of Daud's fasting habit was influenced by supporting factors such as the religious Islamic boarding school environment, the example of the ustadz, and students' internal motivation, while inhibiting factors included physical condition, peer influence, and psychological boredom.

Overall, Daud's fasting habit can be understood as a model of character education based on spiritual experience that is effective in forming Delayed Gratification abilities. This practice shows that the integration between the values of worship in Islamic education and modern psychological concepts is able to make a real contribution to strengthening students' character, especially in the aspects of self-control, patience and future orientation.

Thus, this research confirms that Islamic boarding schools have a strategic role as educational institutions that not only transmit religious values, but also form students' psychological capacities holistically through structured and sustainable worship habits.

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