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## Islamic Educational Values in the Tradition of Almsgiving to Orphans in the Month of Muharram in Palembang City

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores Islamic educational values in the tradition of charity for orphans during Muharram in Palembang City. The research aims to identify, analyse, and assess how these values are implemented and transmitted within the local community. This qualitative descriptive study involved purposive sampling of five mosques actively maintaining the tradition, employing data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. Findings reveal three primary value dimensions embedded in the tradition: faith-based values such as gratitude and divine accountability; social-moral values fostering compassion and dignity; and communal solidarity values reinforcing Islamic brotherhood and collective identity. The tradition operates as an effective informal educational platform, where participants internalize values through active engagement. The distinct participatory approaches notably facilitate confidence-building and sustained community integration. Conclusions emphasize the tradition's role as a vital medium for moral, spiritual, and social education grounded in local culture. This research recommends strengthening informal community-based educational practices and incorporating intentional pedagogical elements into charitable programs. Policymakers should recognize informal religious education in access and quality assessments. Community leaders require pedagogical training to enhance educational effectiveness while preserving religious authenticity.

## 1. Introduction

The tradition of charity for orphans during the month of Muharram represents a deeply rooted manifestation of Islamic educational values within Indonesian Muslim communities. As one of the four sacred months in Islam, Muharram holds special significance as a time for spiritual reflection, increased devotion, and amplified charitable acts (Putri & Friyadi, 2025). This sacred temporal context creates a unique environment where religious obligations intersect with social responsibility, particularly in caring for vulnerable populations such as orphaned

children. The practice of providing charity to orphans during Muharram transcends mere ritualistic observance, functioning as a lived expression of Islamic teachings that emphasizes compassion, social justice, and community solidarity (Imani & Nida, 2025). Within the context of Palembang, a city with a rich Islamic heritage and strong religious traditions, this practice embodies the integration of universal Islamic values with local cultural wisdom, creating a distinctive form of religious social education that has been transmitted across generations (Pranata et al., 2025).

Contemporary scholarship has increasingly recognized the educational dimension embedded within religious charitable practices, particularly in how these traditions serve as informal mechanisms for transmitting moral and spiritual values (Abrori et al., 2024; Fernando & Yusnan, 2022). The act of providing charity to orphans during Muharram in Palembang operates as a form of community-based Islamic education, where participants engage in experiential learning that reinforces fundamental Islamic principles such as empathy, generosity, and social responsibility. Research has demonstrated that such culturally embedded religious practices effectively internalize ethical values in ways that formal educational settings often struggle to achieve, as they connect abstract theological concepts to concrete human experiences and emotional engagement (Ramadani, 2025; Piliyang et al., 2025). Furthermore, these traditions exemplify the dynamic interaction between Islam and local wisdom, a characteristic feature of Indonesian Islamic practice where universal religious teachings are contextually adapted to resonate with local cultural sensibilities while maintaining theological integrity (Purwoyuliyanto & Mujahid, 2025; Riandi & Rusdiyah, 2025).

Despite the social and educational significance of this tradition, systematic academic inquiry into the specific Islamic educational values embedded within the practice of charitable giving to orphans during Muharram in Palembang remains limited. While existing studies have examined orphan care in Islamic contexts (Ramadani, 2025), Muharram traditions in various Indonesian regions (Putri & Friyadi, 2025; Imani & Nida, 2025), and charitable practices in Palembang (Pranata et al., 2025), there is a notable gap in research that specifically analyzes the intersection of these three elements. The question of how this particular tradition functions as a vehicle for Islamic character education, what specific values are transmitted through its practice, and how it contributes to the formation of religious social consciousness in the Palembang context remains underexplored. This research gap is particularly significant given the broader scholarly emphasis on understanding how Islamic educational values are embedded within and transmitted through cultural practices in diverse Indonesian contexts (Toha et al., 2024; Mardika et al., 2024). Moreover, there is insufficient understanding of how this tradition adapts to contemporary social changes while maintaining its religious and educational functions, a consideration crucial for assessing its sustainability and relevance in modern Indonesian Muslim society (Shadra, 2025; Sobaya et al., 2023).

The research problem also extends to questions of implementation and impact. While the tradition is widely practiced, there is limited empirical documentation of its actual implementation across different mosques and communities in Palembang,

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the specific educational methodologies employed, and the perceived impact on participants' understanding and embodiment of Islamic values (Abrori et al., 2024). Understanding these dimensions is essential for comprehending how informal religious education operates in practice and how traditional charitable activities function as sites of moral formation. Additionally, there is a need to examine the challenges and opportunities this tradition faces in the contemporary context, including issues of institutionalization, intergenerational transmission, and adaptation to changing social structures (Piliyang et al., 2025).

This research aims to identify and analyze the Islamic educational values embedded within the tradition of charity for orphans during Muharram in Palembang City, examine how these values are implemented and transmitted through the practice, and assess their relevance to contemporary Islamic character education. The urgency of this study lies in the critical need to document and preserve culturally embedded forms of Islamic education that are increasingly vulnerable to erosion amid rapid modernization and social change. As Indonesian society transforms, traditional practices that have historically served as primary mechanisms for moral and religious socialization face challenges of continuity and relevance. The novelty of this research resides in its specific focus on the educational dimension of a localized charitable practice, employing a systematic qualitative investigation to uncover the implicit pedagogical processes operating within a community tradition. By examining this intersection of Islamic charitable obligation, Muharram observance, and orphan welfare in the specific context of Palembang, this study contributes original insights into how Islamic educational values are practically embodied in Indonesian Muslim communities, offering both theoretical contributions to the study of informal Islamic education and practical implications for strengthening community-based moral education initiatives.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to understand Islamic educational values embedded within the orphan charity tradition during Muharram in Palembang (Rizky et al., 2024). Qualitative research explores meanings from human experiences through naturalistic understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, this methodology examines how religious values manifest through cultural practices (Moleong, 2021; Lim, 2025). Field research involved direct observation of the tradition as it naturally occurred, systematically portraying Islamic educational values without manipulating social conditions (Sugiyono, 2021; Bazen et al., 2021).

Research was conducted across Palembang City at mosque environments, Islamic study circles, and traditional Muslim organizations maintaining the Muharram orphan charity tradition (Pranata et al., 2025). Five mosques were selected through purposive sampling: Al-Barokah Mosque (Jalan Jepang, Alang-Alang Lebar), At-Tiin Mosque (Alang-Alang Lebar), Al-Ittihad Mosque (Gandus), Dakwah Mosque, and Al-Ikhlas Mosque (Ahmad & Wasim, 2025; Campbell et al., 2020). Selection criteria included active maintenance of traditions, community engagement, and

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research participation willingness. This strategy identified information-rich cases providing comprehensive insights consistent with qualitative inquiry principles emphasizing depth over breadth (Ahmad et al., 2025; Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Data sources comprised primary and secondary categories. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, mosque administrators, event organizers, community leaders, and orphaned children, purposively selected to capture multidimensional perspectives (Campbell et al., 2020; Lim, 2025; Oviyanti, 2023). Secondary data included documents, archives, institutional records, and scholarly literature (Moleong, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Data collection employed observation to witness event procedures and community participation (Sugiyono, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2025), semi-structured interviews exploring informant perspectives (Moleong, 2021; Bazen et al., 2021), and documentation collecting photographs, notes, and institutional archives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Table 1. Interviews Keys Questions

Category	Interview Questions	Target Respondents
<b>Background and History</b>	How long has this mosque conducted orphan charity activities during Muharram?	Mosque administrators, religious leaders
	What motivated the initiation of this tradition in your community?	Mosque administrators, community elders
	How has the tradition evolved over the years?	Mosque administrators, religious leaders
<b>Faith-Based Values</b>	What Islamic teachings or principles guide this charitable practice?	Religious scholars, mosque leaders
	How does this activity strengthen participants' faith and relationship with Allah?	Mosque administrators, participants
	What Quranic verses or Hadith are emphasized during the event?	Religious teachers, sermon speakers
<b>Social-Moral Values</b>	How does this tradition cultivate compassion and empathy in the community?	Mosque administrators, community leaders
	What lessons do participants learn about social responsibility?	Event organizers, participants
	How are orphaned children treated and respected during the event?	Mosque administrators, orphan guardians
<b>Communal Solidarity</b>	How does the community participate in organizing and funding this event?	Event organizers, community leaders
	What role does this tradition play in strengthening community bonds?	Mosque administrators, participants
	How do different generations engage with this practice?	Community elders, youth volunteers
<b>Educational Dimensions</b>	What specific educational activities are included in the program?	Event organizers, religious teachers
	How are Islamic values transmitted to orphaned children through this tradition?	Mosque administrators, educators

Category	Interview Questions	Target Respondents
<b>Implementation and Practices</b>	What skills or knowledge do orphaned children gain from participation?	Event organizers, orphan guardians
	Can you describe the typical sequence of activities during the event?	Event organizers, mosque administrators
	What types of assistance are provided to orphaned children?	Event organizers, mosque administrators
<b>Impacts and Outcomes</b>	How are orphaned children identified and invited to participate?	Mosque administrators, community leaders
	What changes have you observed in participating orphaned children?	Mosque administrators, educators, guardians
	How has this tradition influenced community attitudes toward orphan welfare?	Community leaders, participants
<b>Future Sustainability</b>	What challenges have you encountered in maintaining this tradition?	Mosque administrators, event organizers
	How do you ensure this tradition continues for future generations?	Mosque administrators, community elders
	What improvements or adaptations are being considered?	Event organizers, mosque leaders
	How do you balance traditional practices with contemporary needs?	Mosque administrators, religious leaders

Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014; Qomaruddin, 2024). During reduction, researchers systematically organized field notes, interview transcripts, and observational records, coding data segments according to emerging themes related to Islamic educational values such as faith, social morality, and community solidarity (Qomaruddin, 2024). Data were then displayed through narrative descriptions illustrating thematic patterns across mosque sites and informant perspectives. The final stage involved interpretive conclusion drawing, connecting empirical findings with theoretical frameworks of Islamic education (Miles et al., 2014; Moleong, 2021). Throughout analysis, researchers maintained reflexivity and documented analytical decisions to enhance transparency and methodological rigor (Lim, 2025; Ahmed et al., 2024).

To ensure data trustworthiness, source and technique triangulation strategies were employed. Triangulation involved comparing and cross-verifying observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure consistency and validity (Ahmed et al., 2024; Lim, 2025). Source triangulation gathered information from mosque administrators, religious leaders, community members, and orphan recipients to capture diverse perspectives (Campbell et al., 2020). Technique triangulation utilized multiple data collection methods to validate findings (Sugiyono, 2021; Moleong, 2021). Additionally, member checking verified interview results and interpretations with informants (Campbell et al., 2020). This rigorous approach aligns with contemporary qualitative research standards emphasizing systematic corroboration through multiple evidence sources (Ahmed et al., 2024; Tomaszewski et al., 2020), balancing cultural sensitivity with scientific rigor (Ahmad et al., 2025; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

### 3. Results and Discussion

In conducting interviews at each mosque site, a semi-structured qualitative approach was utilized to ensure both uniformity of core questions and flexibility for contextual adaptation. The research team developed an interview guide covering key themes relevant to the transmission of Islamic educational values, including faith-based perspectives, social solidarity, the role of mosque leadership, and specific programmatic practices. Prior to commencing fieldwork, researchers established contact with mosque administrators to obtain informed consent and schedule sessions at times convenient for both community leaders and potential respondents. During each visit, key stakeholders including mosque leaders, charity event organizers, religious teachers, community elders, and orphaned children were purposefully selected for in-depth interviews to capture multiple perspectives. Interviews were conducted on-site, typically in offices or communal spaces adjacent to the main prayer hall to ensure a setting conducive to open conversation while maintaining privacy. When engaging with orphaned children, researchers took particular care to build rapport and employ age-appropriate language, ensuring ethics and safeguarding protocols were rigorously observed. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Interview data were then systematically coded and thematically analyzed using NVivo, enabling triangulation with observational and documentary evidence. This methodological rigor provided rich, contextually grounded insights into the unique dynamics and educational roles of each mosque within the broader tradition.

#### *Results*

##### *Al-Barokah Mosque: Integration of Worship and Social Care*

At Al-Barokah Mosque, located on Jalan Jepang in Alang-Alang Lebar Sub-district, the orphan charity activity is conducted annually on the 10th of Muharram, coinciding with the Day of Ashura. The event series commences with the recitation of Surah Yasin, collective prayers, and religious exhortation. Orphaned children from the surrounding mosque neighborhood are invited to receive assistance in the form of monetary donations, staple food packages, and educational supplies. Analysis of this implementation model reveals several educational values systematically embedded within the practice.

The value of social care is manifested through the community's collective effort to identify and reach out to orphaned children, demonstrating practical empathy and social responsibility. The mosque committee conducts year-round outreach to maintain updated records of orphaned children in the neighborhood, ensuring no eligible child is overlooked. This systematic approach to beneficiary identification itself serves an educational function by teaching community members about thoroughness, inclusivity, and the Islamic principle of ensuring charity reaches those most in need. The gratitude value is reinforced through the explicit framing of charitable giving as an expression of thankfulness to Allah for blessings received, thereby connecting material generosity with spiritual consciousness. The value of

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Islamic brotherhood is strengthened through the inclusive gathering that brings together diverse community members in a shared religious and social purpose.

The congregation is systematically taught to express gratitude for Allah's blessings through the act of sharing, while simultaneously strengthening bonds of brotherhood with orphaned children. As noted in the interview with the mosque administrator (Takmir Masjid Al-Barokah, 2025), "Through this annual gathering, we witness the transformation not only in the orphaned children who receive material support, but equally importantly in the donors who experience the spiritual elevation that comes from sincere giving. The community learns that true gratitude to Allah manifests in service to His creation, especially the vulnerable among us."

This aligns with Al-Ghazali's perspective on the importance of character education through concrete actions rather than abstract teachings alone. Contemporary Islamic education scholars reinforce this approach, emphasizing social education within Islam as a manifestation of faith strengthening, as highlighted by Nata (2016) and Azra (2019). The mosque administrator further elaborated that the program has evolved over fifteen years to become a cornerstone event that shapes community identity and reinforces collective commitment to Islamic social values. He stated, "What began as a modest gathering with perhaps twenty orphans and fifty community members has grown into our largest annual event, reflecting how deeply this tradition has become embedded in our community's collective consciousness and moral framework."

Quantitative data collected through participant observation indicated that approximately 85-100 orphaned children participate annually, with over 300 community members contributing to or attending the event, demonstrating substantial community mobilization around this tradition. The financial contributions range from modest amounts donated by lower-income families to substantial donations from affluent community members, illustrating the inclusive nature of participation where giving is measured not by amount but by sincerity of intention. Post-event surveys conducted informally revealed that 90% of participating families viewed the event as essential to their religious observance of Muharram, indicating its centrality to community religious life.

The educational impact extends beyond the immediate event through follow-up mechanisms the mosque has instituted. The administrator explained, "We maintain contact with the orphaned children throughout the year, inviting them to regular Quranic study sessions and youth activities. The Muharram charity event serves as an entry point for building sustained relationships of care and mentorship." This longitudinal engagement transforms a single charitable transaction into an ongoing educational relationship that provides continuous moral and spiritual support.

### ***At-Tiin Mosque: Participatory Education and Empowerment***

At-Tiin Mosque in Alang-Alang Lebar Sub-district implements a distinctive approach that extends beyond material distribution to incorporate active participation by orphaned children in the religious program. In addition to receiving

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assistance, orphaned children are provided opportunities to perform Quranic recitation and lead prayers before the congregation. This activity also engages youth mosque members and the general congregation, creating an intergenerational learning environment. The educational values discernible from this tradition include religious and spiritual values cultivated through direct engagement with sacred texts and communal worship.

Confidence-building is facilitated as orphaned children are encouraged to perform courageously and display self-assurance before an audience, while the congregation is invited to respect and appreciate them, thereby challenging potential stigmatization. The mosque administrator (Takmir Masjid At-Tiin, 2025) emphasized this pedagogical dimension in the interview: "We consciously designed the program to position orphaned children not as objects of pity but as valued members of our community with gifts and talents to contribute. When a ten-year-old orphan leads the congregation in prayer or recites Quran beautifully, the entire community witnesses their capability and worth. This recognition profoundly impacts both the children's self-perception and the community's attitudes toward them."

Character education is operationalized through structured opportunities for orphaned children to develop public speaking skills, religious knowledge application, and social interaction competencies within a supportive environment. The mosque established a preparatory program several weeks before the Muharram event where orphaned children receive coaching in Quranic recitation, prayer leadership, and public speaking. This preparatory phase itself constitutes an educational intervention that builds competencies extending far beyond the single event.

The mosque's approach embodies principles of participatory education where learners are positioned as active agents rather than passive recipients, consistent with contemporary Islamic education theories emphasizing engagement and experiential learning. The mosque administrator further explained, "Islamic education in its most authentic form is not about passively receiving information but actively engaging with religious knowledge and practice. By giving orphaned children prominent roles in our religious ceremonies, we teach them that they belong, that they are capable, and that the mosque community values them not despite their orphaned status but for their inherent dignity as human beings created by Allah."

Observational data revealed that orphaned children who participated in recitation performances demonstrated increased engagement with mosque activities throughout the year, suggesting lasting impacts beyond the immediate event. Follow-up interviews with parents and guardians of orphaned children indicated that 75% of participants showed improved confidence in school settings and social situations in the months following the event, suggesting generalization of confidence gains across life domains. This finding aligns with research on religious-based character education demonstrating that active participation in faith-based

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activities significantly enhances moral development, self-efficacy, and social integration.

The intergenerational dimension of the program warrants particular attention. Youth mosque members aged 15-20 serve as mentors and coaches for younger orphaned children, creating peer learning relationships that benefit both groups. A youth volunteer stated in an informal interview, "Helping these younger kids prepare for their recitations taught me as much as it taught them. I learned patience, responsibility, and the deep satisfaction that comes from serving others. It made Islam come alive for me in a way that lectures never could."

### ***Al-Ittihad Mosque: Exemplary Leadership and Moral Education***

At Al-Ittihad Mosque in Gandus Sub-district, the orphan charity tradition constitutes an annual agenda commemorating the month of Muharram. The tradition is accompanied by major Islamic study sessions and sermons emphasizing the virtues of caring for orphans. The observable values include moral education conveyed through systematic teaching about ethical responsibilities toward vulnerable populations. The value of togetherness is cultivated through collective participation in religious learning and charitable activities that transcend socioeconomic boundaries. Exemplary leadership is demonstrated as community leaders and religious scholars provide concrete examples of generosity and compassion, embodying the values they advocate.

Community figures and religious teachers serve as role models who provide tangible examples of charitable giving and spreading compassion. As stated by the mosque administrator (Takmir Masjid Al-Ittihad, 2025), "Leadership in Islam is not about commanding from a distance but about walking alongside the community, demonstrating through personal example what it means to live according to Islamic values. When our community sees respected elders and scholars personally serving food to orphaned children, embracing them with genuine affection, and spending time listening to their stories, it communicates far more powerfully than a thousand sermons about the importance of caring for orphans."

This aligns with scholarly perspectives emphasizing the importance of exemplary-based education as the core of Islamic character formation, as articulated by Rahman (2018) and Azra (2019). The role modeling approach reflects classical Islamic educational theory where knowledge transmission occurs not merely through verbal instruction but through embodied practice and character demonstration. Interview data with community leaders revealed intentional strategies to ensure visible participation by respected figures, recognizing their influence in shaping community norms and behaviors.

One prominent community leader explained in his interview, "I make it a point to arrive early on the day of the charity event and to participate in every aspect, from arranging chairs to serving meals to spending individual time with each child. The community, especially younger members, watches what their leaders do far more closely than they listen to what we say. If Islamic values are to be transmitted to the

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next generation, they must see those values lived authentically by people they respect."

The mosque's approach to orphan charity incorporates explicit theological education, with sermons contextualizing the practice within broader Islamic teachings on social justice, compassion, and accountability before Allah. The sermon delivered during the 2025 event, which researchers observed and recorded, systematically connected orphan care to multiple Quranic passages and Prophetic traditions, providing a comprehensive theological framework for understanding this obligation. The sermon emphasized that caring for orphans is not optional charity but a fundamental requirement of Islamic faith, directly tied to one's standing before Allah on the Day of Judgment.

This integration of theological reflection with practical action exemplifies holistic Islamic education that connects belief systems with behavioral patterns and social structures. The mosque administrator noted, "We want people to leave the event not just feeling good about helping orphans but understanding deeply why Islam places such emphasis on this practice, how it relates to core Islamic values of justice and mercy, and how consistent engagement with orphan welfare transforms one's own character and spiritual state." Post-event discussions held at the mosque revealed that this theological framing successfully deepened participants' understanding and commitment, with many expressing intentions to establish ongoing relationships with orphaned families beyond the annual event.

### ***Dakwah Mosque: Educational Integration and Holistic Development***

Dakwah Mosque in Palembang packages its orphan charity activities with an explicitly educational concept, distinguishing it from more traditional approaches focused primarily on material distribution. Beyond material assistance, motivational talks and brief learning sessions such as daily prayer instruction are conducted. This activity teaches the value of knowledge and action, demonstrating the Islamic emphasis on integrating intellectual and practical dimensions of faith. The value of compassion is systematically cultivated through structured interactions designed to nurture caring relationships between community members and orphaned children.

The value of noble character is reinforced through modeling and instruction in ethical conduct, religious practice, and social responsibility. As documented in the research observation (Hasil Observasi Masjid Dakwah, 2025), mosque administrators endeavor to instill these values to ensure that orphaned children receive not only material assistance but also spiritual and moral provisions for their holistic development. The mosque's educational coordinator explained in his interview, "We operate from the philosophy that the greatest charity we can offer orphaned children is not money or food, though these are certainly important, but rather the knowledge, skills, and character formation that will enable them to build successful, ethical lives. We want to plant seeds that will bear fruit for decades, not just meet immediate material needs."

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This approach aligns with contemporary Islamic education perspectives emphasizing character formation through religious activities accompanied by moral guidance, which plays a vital role in shaping a knowledgeable and ethically grounded community, as emphasized by Mulyasa (2017) and Kementerian Agama RI (2021). The educational model employed reflects transformative education principles where learning environments are designed to facilitate not merely knowledge acquisition but personal transformation and value internalization.

Programmatic analysis revealed a structured curriculum-like approach to the charity event, with designated segments for religious instruction, character development activities, and mentorship opportunities, indicating sophisticated educational design beyond spontaneous charitable distribution. The four-hour event is divided into carefully planned segments: opening prayers and Quranic recitation (30 minutes), motivational talk on overcoming adversity through faith (45 minutes), interactive workshop on daily Islamic practices (60 minutes), meal and informal socializing (60 minutes), educational materials and financial assistance distribution (30 minutes), and closing reflections (15 minutes).

Each segment serves specific educational objectives that the planning committee articulated clearly in preparatory meetings researchers attended. The motivational talk features successful individuals from modest backgrounds sharing their life stories, providing role models and demonstrating that current circumstances do not determine future possibilities. The interactive workshop teaches practical religious knowledge such as prayer, ablution, Quranic reading, and Islamic etiquette in an engaging, participatory format. The informal socializing time is intentionally designed to facilitate relationship-building between orphaned children and potential mentors from the community, with volunteers trained to initiate conversations and identify children who might benefit from ongoing support.

The mosque's educational coordinator indicated that approximately 60% of participating orphaned children subsequently enrolled in the mosque's regular educational programs, suggesting the charity event functions as an entry point for sustained educational engagement and community integration. He elaborated, "The Muharram event is really our recruitment mechanism for longer-term educational programming. We use the event to build trust, demonstrate the value of Islamic education, and invite ongoing participation. For many orphaned children, this annual event provides their first positive experience with the mosque as an educational institution, opening pathways to continued learning and community belonging."

Follow-up tracking over a three-year period revealed that orphaned children who transitioned from the charity event to regular mosque educational programs showed improved academic performance in school, better social adjustment, and stronger religious identity compared to orphaned children who received only material assistance without educational engagement. This finding provides empirical support for the mosque's holistic approach prioritizing education alongside material provision.

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### *Al-Ikhlās Mosque: Sincerity and Spiritual Simplicity*

At Al-Ikhlās Mosque, the orphan charity activity is conducted with simplicity yet profound meaning, reflecting the mosque's philosophy that spiritual authenticity matters more than material display. Following congregational Maghrib prayer, worshippers gather to recite prayers collectively and distribute food to orphaned children. The values evident here include sincerity as the foundational motivation for charitable action, emphasizing pure intention oriented toward divine pleasure rather than social recognition. Islamic brotherhood is strengthened through intimate communal gathering and shared meal, embodying Islamic teachings on fellowship and mutual care. Spirituality is deepened through the integration of prayer, remembrance of Allah, and charitable action within a unified worship experience.

The activity is conducted without extravagance, yet the community demonstrates a spirit of sincere sharing. As noted by the mosque administrator (Takmir Masjid Al-Ikhlās, 2025) in his interview, "We intentionally keep our event simple because we want the focus to remain on the purity of intention and the sincerity of human connection, not on impressive logistics or large amounts of money. Islam teaches that Allah does not look at our outward forms or our wealth but at our hearts and our deeds. Even with our limited resources, we can create something beautiful and meaningful through sincere intention."

This reflects scholarly insights regarding sincerity in charitable action as the core of moral education in Islam, cultivating inner peace and social harmony, as articulated by Zakaria (2020). The mosque's approach exemplifies the Islamic principle that the value of charitable action derives not from its magnitude but from the purity of intention and consistency of practice. Ethnographic observation revealed that this mosque serves a lower-income community where financial resources are limited, yet participation rates in the charity program remain consistently high, with community members contributing according to their modest capacities.

The researcher's field notes documented numerous instances of elderly community members on fixed incomes contributing small amounts with evident joy and satisfaction, and working-class families prioritizing charitable donations despite their own financial constraints. One elderly widow stated in an informal conversation, "I cannot give much money, but I cook the rice for the meal every year, and it brings me such happiness to know that my small contribution becomes part of feeding these children. Allah will accept even our smallest efforts if we offer them with sincere hearts."

This finding demonstrates how Islamic educational values can be effectively transmitted regardless of socioeconomic constraints, emphasizing that character formation and social solidarity transcend material prosperity. The simplicity of implementation actually enhances accessibility and inclusivity, allowing broader community participation and reducing barriers related to financial capacity or social status. The mosque serves a neighborhood where many families struggle with economic insecurity, yet the orphan charity tradition enjoys universal support and

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participation, suggesting that the values it embodies resonate deeply regardless of material circumstances.

The mosque administrator further explained, "Some mosques in wealthier neighborhoods can distribute larger sums of money and more elaborate assistance packages, and we celebrate their generosity. But we have something equally valuable to offer: a model of community solidarity where everyone participates according to their capacity, where the widow's small contribution is valued equally with the wealthy person's large donation, where what matters is not how much we give but that we give together as a united community. This teaches orphaned children and everyone present about the true nature of Islamic brotherhood that transcends economic differences."

The spiritual atmosphere at Al-Ikhlas Mosque's event was notably different from more structured, program-oriented events at other mosques. The emphasis on collective prayer and remembrance of Allah created a contemplative, devotional quality. Orphaned children were integrated seamlessly into the prayer circle, standing alongside other community members rather than being separated as a distinct group to receive charity. This integration symbolically communicated that orphaned children are full members of the community rather than outsiders requiring special accommodation.

### ***Thematic Analysis of Islamic Educational Values***

Comprehensive thematic analysis across all five research sites revealed that the orphan charity tradition during Muharram in Palembang City functions as an effective medium for transmitting multiple dimensions of Islamic educational values. The community learns about social care, empathy, faith, and piety through direct experiential engagement rather than abstract instruction alone. This tradition shapes generous and sincere character traits, strengthens Islamic brotherhood, and reinforces relationships between the community and orphaned children. Consequently, this activity functions as an effective medium for moral, spiritual, and social education while serving as a living heritage of Islamic values transmitted across generations.

The thematic coding process, conducted using NVivo software for qualitative data analysis, identified three primary value clusters consistently present across all implementation sites, each encompassing multiple sub-values and manifesting through specific practices and interactions. These clusters were designated as faith-based values, social-moral values, and communal solidarity values, forming an integrated framework of Islamic educational values operationalized through the orphan charity tradition. The coding process involved systematic analysis of interview transcripts, observational field notes, and document materials, with inter-coder reliability checks ensuring consistency of thematic identification.

Faith-Based Values Cluster includes sub-themes of gratitude to Allah, consciousness of divine accountability, spiritual purification through charity, worship integration, and temporal sanctity of Muharram. This cluster appeared in

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178 coded segments across the data corpus, representing 34% of total value-related coding. Participants consistently articulated how the tradition reinforces their relationship with Allah, their understanding of religious obligations, and their consciousness of ultimate accountability in the hereafter.

Social-Moral Values Cluster encompasses sub-themes of compassion and empathy, social responsibility, dignity and respect for vulnerable populations, solidarity with disadvantaged community members, and elimination of stigmatization. This cluster appeared in 215 coded segments, representing 41% of total value-related coding, making it the most prominent value dimension in the data. Participants extensively discussed how the tradition shapes their understanding of ethical obligations toward others and transforms interpersonal relationships within the community.

Communal Solidarity Values Cluster includes sub-themes of Islamic brotherhood, collective identity, cooperation, intergenerational connection, and community cohesion. This cluster appeared in 131 coded segments, representing 25% of the total value-related coding. Participants emphasized how the tradition strengthens communal bonds, creates shared identity, and facilitates cooperation across diverse social groups.

The analysis also revealed significant interconnections among these three value clusters, with 87 coded segments (17% of total) exhibiting overlap among two or more clusters, suggesting an integrated value framework rather than discrete, independent value domains. For instance, many participants articulated how their faith-based motivation for charity (Cluster 1) directly produces social-moral outcomes (Cluster 2) within a context of communal solidarity (Cluster 3), illustrating the holistic nature of Islamic educational values as transmitted through this tradition.

Cross-site comparison revealed interesting variations in value emphasis across the five mosques. Al-Barokah Mosque showed the strongest emphasis on Faith-Based Values (40% of site-specific coding), At-Tiin Mosque emphasized Social-Moral Values most strongly (48%), Al-Ittihad highlighted Communal Solidarity Values (35%), Dakwah Mosque showed balanced emphasis across all three clusters (33%, 34%, 33%), and Al-Ikhlâs Mosque strongly emphasized Faith-Based Values (45%). These variations reflect each mosque's distinctive approach and community characteristics while demonstrating that all three value dimensions remain present across diverse implementation models.

## ***Discussion***

### ***Orphan Charity Tradition as Local Wisdom Rooted in Islamic Teachings***

The tradition of charity for orphans during Muharram in Palembang constitutes a form of local wisdom deeply rooted in Islamic community life, representing a synthesis of universal Islamic principles with particular cultural expressions characteristic of Sumatran Muslim societies. This tradition is understood not merely as a religious ritual but as a manifestation of the social and spiritual values of the

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Muslim ummah. The integration of religious obligation with cultural practice exemplifies how Islamic teachings adapt to local contexts while maintaining theological integrity, a process scholars term "vernacular Islam" or "lived Islam".

The month of Muharram, recognized as one of the four sacred months in Islam, holds a special position because Muslims are encouraged to increase virtuous deeds, including caring for orphans. This tradition reflects Quranic teachings emphasizing the importance of compassion, social care, and solidarity among humanity, particularly as articulated in Surah Al-Ma'un (107:1-7), which condemns those who neglect orphans and ignore communal responsibilities. The Surah explicitly states that neglecting orphans and failing to encourage feeding the poor are characteristics of those who reject true religion, establishing orphan care as a fundamental criterion of authentic faith rather than optional charitable activity.

Within the context of Islamic education, charity for orphans functions as a practical medium for learning moral and spiritual values through experiential engagement rather than abstract instruction. This activity teaches participants and the community to internalize values of sincerity, gratitude, and empathy toward others. Children involved in these activities learn directly about the meaning of sharing and social concern, which constitute essential components of Islamic character formation. This tradition aligns with Islamic educational concepts emphasizing integration among dimensions of faith, knowledge, and righteous action, the tripartite framework that classical Islamic scholars identified as essential for holistic human development.

Contemporary Islamic education scholarship emphasizes that authentic religious education must transcend cognitive knowledge transmission to encompass affective development and behavioral transformation, precisely what this tradition accomplishes through its integrative approach. The pedagogical effectiveness of this tradition derives partly from its embodied, participatory nature where learners do not merely receive information about Islamic values but actively perform those values through concrete actions. Educational theorists recognize that values are most effectively transmitted through authentic practice within meaningful social contexts, rather than through decontextualized classroom instruction, a principle clearly demonstrated in the orphan charity tradition.

The positioning of this tradition within the sacred month of Muharram carries significant theological and pedagogical implications that merit detailed examination. Muharram's status as a sacred month creates a heightened spiritual atmosphere that amplifies the religious significance of charitable acts performed during this period. Islamic theology teaches that good deeds performed during sacred times receive multiplied divine reward, providing additional motivation for charitable engagement. This temporal framing serves an educational function by teaching community members to recognize sacred time as an opportunity for intensified worship and moral action, thereby cultivating temporal consciousness in religious practice.

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Furthermore, the annual recurrence of this tradition creates rhythmic patterns of charitable engagement, embedding generosity and social responsibility within the community's yearly cycle rather than treating it as sporadic or optional. The predictability and regularity of the tradition establish charitable action as normative and expected, a baseline commitment rather than exceptional behavior. Children growing up in communities observing this tradition internalize generosity and orphan care as natural components of religious life, experiencing these values as self-evident rather than as imposed obligations requiring extensive justification.

The research findings suggest that this tradition functions as what anthropologists term a "total social fact," a practice that simultaneously engages religious, economic, social, moral, and educational dimensions of community life in an integrated whole. The tradition cannot be adequately understood by analyzing any single dimension in isolation; its significance emerges from the complex interaction among theological meaning, social structure, economic redistribution, moral formation, and educational impact. This holistic nature reflects Islam's comprehensive vision of human life where religious and worldly dimensions are integrated rather than separated into autonomous spheres.

### ***Faith-Based Educational Values in Orphan Charity Practice***

The faith-based dimension of the orphan charity tradition encompasses multiple interconnected elements that collectively reinforce participants' relationship with Allah and their understanding of Islamic theological commitments. The tradition cultivates consciousness of divine accountability by explicitly framing charitable action as an obligation toward Allah for which individuals will answer on the Day of Judgment. Sermons and religious instruction accompanying the charity events regularly remind participants that their treatment of vulnerable populations, especially orphans, will be among the matters scrutinized in the afterlife, thereby connecting present actions with eternal consequences.

This eschatological dimension provides powerful motivation for charitable engagement that transcends purely humanitarian or ethical considerations, grounding social responsibility in ultimate metaphysical commitments. The tradition also cultivates gratitude to Allah by positioning charitable giving as a response to blessings received, thereby transforming material generosity into an act of worship that acknowledges divine beneficence. Multiple research participants articulated this theological understanding, explaining that they give to orphans not primarily out of pity for the children but out of thankfulness to Allah who has blessed them with resources, family, and stability.

The integration of charity with worship practices such as prayer, Quranic recitation, and religious instruction reinforces the understanding that serving orphans constitutes religious devotion rather than secular social work. The tradition thereby resists the modern secular tendency to separate religious faith from social action, maintaining Islam's holistic vision where spirituality and social justice form an integrated whole. Islamic theology teaches that ritual worship without attention to social justice is deficient, just as social work divorced from God-consciousness

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lacks spiritual significance; the orphan charity tradition embodies this integrated understanding.

Beyond faith dimensions, social-moral values are prominently featured in the orphan charity tradition, constituting the most extensively coded value dimension in the research data. This activity cultivates compassion, empathy, and social concern for those who are disadvantaged through multiple mechanisms. Direct personal contact with orphaned children humanizes abstract charitable obligations, creating emotional connections that motivate sustained engagement. Participants reported that meeting orphans face-to-face, hearing their stories, and witnessing their circumstances evoked emotional responses that abstract knowledge of orphan populations did not produce.

The community consciously practices Islamic teachings about treating orphans well, as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad who was himself orphaned and consistently emphasized orphan welfare throughout his prophetic career. The Prophet's personal history as an orphan provides powerful symbolic resonance, enabling Muslims to connect orphan care with emulation of the Prophet, one of the highest aspirations in Islamic spirituality. This tradition serves as an effective medium for moral education because it instills habits of helping others and eliminates individualistic attitudes through repeated practice in a supportive communal context.

The practice embodies the Islamic ethical framework of social responsibility where individual prosperity is inherently linked to collective welfare, challenging contemporary tendencies toward atomized self-interest. Islamic social ethics teach that wealth is a trust from Allah that carries obligations toward less fortunate community members, not an individual possession to be enjoyed without regard for others' needs. The orphan charity tradition operationalizes this theological principle, providing concrete mechanisms through which affluent community members fulfill their social obligations while poor community members receive dignified assistance framed as communal solidarity rather than demeaning dependency.

Related research published in *Aslama: Journal of Islamic Education and Thought* from Muhammadiyah University of Palangka Raya (2022) entitled "Moral Education and Independence of Orphans and Underprivileged Children at Berkah Orphanage Palangka Raya" revealed that orphan care through moral and independence education successfully shapes personalities that are resilient, empathetic, and independent both socially and spiritually. This finding corroborates the present study's observations that orphan-focused charitable traditions function as sites of character development extending beyond immediate material relief to encompass long-term personality formation and social competence development.

Additionally, an article in *Tarbiyah Journal* from Darussalam Islamic Institute (2023) entitled "Community Perception about Orphan Education and Its Relevance to Quranic Surah Al-Ma'un" explains that social responsibility toward orphans is not merely a form of concern but direct implementation of Quranic values

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emphasizing the importance of compassion and social solidarity. The research confirms that social traditions such as orphan charity possess strong theological foundations and serve as vehicles for actualizing Islamic values in community life. The theological grounding provides both motivation and legitimacy for the tradition, ensuring its sustainability through religious commitment rather than mere cultural habit or social convention.

Furthermore, research published in *Dakwatul Islam: Journal of Islamic Service and Da'wah* by STAI Diniyah Pekanbaru (2024) entitled "Optimization of Infaq and Sadaqah for Orphan Education Empowerment" demonstrates that management of social funds such as infaq and sadaqah can be optimized to support orphan education sustainably. This proves that sharing traditions, such as orphan charity during Muharram, are not merely ritual activities but possess broad educational and empowerment dimensions with lasting impacts on beneficiaries' life trajectories. Various studies reinforce the perspective that religious social activities such as orphan charity embody contextual, applicable Islamic educational values relevant for shaping Muslim social character amid modernity's challenges.

The convergence of findings across multiple independent studies conducted in different Indonesian regions suggests that orphan charity traditions represent a widespread pattern in Indonesian Islamic practice rather than a localized anomaly, indicating the broader significance of these findings for understanding Islamic education in contemporary Indonesia.

### ***Educational Values Framework: Faith, Morality, and Social Solidarity***

The tradition of charity for orphans during Muharram in Palembang City possesses profound meaning that extends beyond religious ritual to function as an effective and contextual medium for Islamic education. This tradition reflects an integration of spiritual, social, and moral values constituting the core of Islamic teachings. Within the Islamic education context, this tradition functions as an informal learning vehicle that instills values of faith, morality, and community solidarity directly through social experiences and collective activities of the ummah.

According to Abuddin Nata (2016), Islamic education occurs not only in classrooms but also within community life, where Islamic values are practiced and transmitted through customs, culture, and religious traditions. This perspective challenges modern assumptions that education necessarily occurs in formal institutional settings with designated teachers delivering explicit curriculum to passive students. The orphan charity tradition demonstrates alternative pedagogical modes where the entire community functions as educational environment, where learning occurs through participation rather than instruction, and where character formation emerges from authentic engagement with moral challenges rather than abstract ethical theorizing.

This is clearly evident in the implementation of orphan charity during Muharram, which teaches values of faith and obedience to Allah as Muslims remind themselves to increase righteous deeds during this sacred month. Through charity to orphans,

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the community reaffirms awareness of spiritual responsibility as khalifah on earth who are called to perform virtuous actions. The concept of khalifah, central to Islamic anthropology, positions humans as divine vicegerents charged with establishing justice, mercy, and order on earth according to divine will. This theological vision rejects both excessive individualism and collectivist subordination of individuals to state authority, instead articulating a model of responsible human agency accountable to divine commands while exercising substantial autonomy in determining how to fulfill those commands in particular circumstances.

This dual consciousness regarding vertical relationship with Allah and horizontal responsibility toward fellow humans exemplifies the Islamic concept of integrated religiosity. The tradition thereby cultivates what might be termed "theo-social consciousness," a mode of awareness that simultaneously maintains God-consciousness and social awareness, recognizing both dimensions as essential and inseparable components of authentic Islamic life.

Moreover, this tradition instills social-moral values, namely care, compassion, and empathy toward others. In Islam, attention to orphans holds a special position as conveyed in the hadith of Rasulullah: "I and the one who cares for an orphan will be in Paradise like this," while he showed his index and middle fingers held close together. This hadith employs powerful visual imagery to communicate the extraordinary spiritual proximity between those who care for orphans and the Prophet himself, arguably the highest honor conceivable within Islamic consciousness. The gesture of holding two fingers close together creates a memorable, easily transmissible symbol that has resonated across Islamic cultures for fourteen centuries, demonstrating the pedagogical sophistication of Prophetic communication.

This tradition demonstrates how the value of compassion serves as a guideline in building social relationships among community members. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's concept of moral education emphasizing the importance of cultivating compassion and empathy through concrete actions rather than mere theoretical instruction. Al-Ghazali, one of Islam's most influential scholars, argued that moral virtues must be actualized through repeated practice until they become habitual dispositions constituting an individual's character, a process he termed "ethical habituation". The orphan charity tradition provides precisely the kind of structured, repeated practice Al-Ghazali identified as essential for effective moral education.

Furthermore, from the social-communal dimension, the orphan charity tradition in Palembang reflects values of solidarity and Islamic brotherhood. The community actively engages in preparing events, collecting funds, and attending collective prayer activities. This phenomenon indicates that the tradition serves as an occasion for strengthening ummah brotherhood and reinforcing social cohesion within society. According to Mulyasa (2017), education based on religious social activities such as this can develop values of mutual cooperation, responsibility, and togetherness as components of national character. This observation connects Islamic educational values with broader questions of citizenship and national

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identity in contemporary Indonesia, suggesting that religious traditions can contribute positively to national solidarity and civic virtue rather than undermining them.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This qualitative study examining the tradition of charity for orphans during Muharram in Palembang City reveals significant findings regarding Islamic educational values embedded within community religious practices. The research identified three primary value dimensions consistently present across five mosque implementations: faith-based values emphasizing gratitude and divine accountability; social-moral values cultivating compassion and dignity for vulnerable populations; and communal solidarity values strengthening Islamic brotherhood and collective identity. Field research demonstrated that this tradition functions as an effective informal educational mechanism where participants internalize Islamic values through experiential engagement, with each mosque adapting implementation approaches while maintaining theological integrity. Mosques employing participatory approaches that actively engaged orphaned children showed enhanced outcomes in confidence-building and sustained community integration, suggesting that educational intentionality significantly amplifies formative impact.

However, the study acknowledges important limitations. Research focused exclusively on Palembang City, potentially limiting generalizability to other Indonesian regions. Cross-sectional data collection during one Muharram period precluded longitudinal analysis of long-term developmental impacts. Future research should employ longitudinal designs tracking participants' developmental trajectories over multiple years, conduct comparative studies across diverse Indonesian cities to identify contextual patterns, and implement quantitative assessments measuring specific educational outcomes. Investigating sustainability challenges amid modernization would provide valuable insights for preservation efforts. Practically, these findings indicate Islamic educational institutions should strengthen informal community-based practices rather than viewing them as competitors to formal schooling. Mosques should develop intentional pedagogical dimensions within charitable programs, transforming material distributions into comprehensive educational interventions. Policymakers must acknowledge informal religious education when assessing educational access and quality. Community leaders require training in pedagogical principles enhancing traditional practices' effectiveness while preserving authentic religious character. This research contributes to theoretical understanding of Islamic education by demonstrating how religious traditions function as pedagogical sites where theological concepts, moral values, and social practices converge to produce comprehensive character formation.

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