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The Role of the Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an Al-Ikhlas in Character Formation of Children in Mojo Wetan Village, Sragen

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ABSTRACT

In the midst of increasing moral challenges faced by children today, early Islamic education plays a critical role in character development. This study aims to describe the role of the Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) Al-Ikhlas in shaping children's character in Mojo Wetan Village, Sragen, and to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in this process. The formation of a strong and noble character is the main goal of early Islamic education. This study uses a phenomenological approach through field research methods, utilizing data collection techniques in the form of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects included students, ustadz, and parents or guardians. The results show that TPA Al-Ikhlas not only functions as a center for learning the Quran, but also as an institution for character formation through the instilling of praiseworthy morals, routine religious activities, fostering daily manners, and role models. Supporting factors include the religious environment and active parental involvement, while inhibiting factors include the lack of role models at home and the negative influence of technology. This study concludes that collaboration between TPA, families, and the wider community is crucial in building a generation of Muslims with strong character and contributing positively to their environment.

1. Introduction

Character education is a form of value transformation aimed at shaping individuals to develop good personality traits and noble behavior. According to Suyitno (2018), character education is a process of internalizing values into virtues that are then reflected in attitudes and actions. The urgency of Islamic character education lies in its ability to build individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally upright. By embedding religious teachings, fostering worship practices, and internalizing spiritual values, Islamic education strengthens faith and helps individuals form a deep spiritual relationship with Allah SWT. In this context, character becomes an essential foundation that integrates one's emotional, moral, and behavioral dimensions to produce a balanced and holistic personality.

Terminologically, the definition of character varies depending on the perspective and context. According to Sudrajat (2011), as quoted by Thomas Lickona, character education can be defined as any effort aimed at shaping and influencing a person's character. Character education is a conscious process designed to guide individuals to understand, respect, and apply fundamental moral values in their lives.

The family, particularly parents, serves as the primary and most influential environment in children's moral and character development. Children are entrusted by Allah SWT to their parents, and this trust must be upheld with great responsibility. However, the dynamics of modern life often disrupt parental roles, as seen in growing concerns among parents when children enter adolescence marked by disobedience, emotional instability, and tendencies toward social withdrawal. A lack of parental involvement or moral modeling can lead children to seek alternative forms of identity and freedom, often influenced by external factors that are not aligned with Islamic values. This underscores the urgent need for a collaborative effort between families and educational institutions in nurturing strong moral foundations in children.

Given the challenges of the millennial era, TPA (Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an) teachers bear significant responsibility in complementing parental roles. TPA Al-Ikhlâs, located in Mojo Wetan Village, Sragen, provides structured Islamic education focusing on the Quran, moral values, daily prayers, and ethical conduct. The institution serves not only as a place to learn to read and memorize the Quran but also as a center for nurturing moral and ethical behavior. By embedding character education through teaching the Quran and incorporating real-life moral practices, TPA Al-Ikhlâs builds a framework for children to grow as individuals with strong Islamic identities and sound moral judgment. These efforts are essential for shaping a generation that can withstand modern challenges while remaining rooted in religious values.

The significance of character education is also reflected in national policy. Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System places character development at the core of educational objectives. It emphasizes the creation of a dignified nation through education that fosters faith, piety, noble character, health, knowledge, creativity, and democratic responsibility. This vision aligns with broader educational movements that aim to cultivate not only intellectual but also emotional and ethical competence in students (Rosidatun, 2018). Early childhood Islamic education, such as that provided by TPAs, becomes a vital instrument in achieving these goals, ensuring that children are not only academically prepared but also morally equipped to contribute positively to society.

Based on the above considerations, the present study is conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role played by Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) Al-Ikhlâs in Mojo Wetan Village, Sragen, in the formation of children's character through Islamic educational values and practices. This research seeks to examine how TPA Al-Ikhlâs integrates moral teachings, religious routines, and behavioral modeling into its daily activities, and how these efforts contribute to

nurturing students with noble character, discipline, and a sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the strategies employed by TPA educators in instilling Islamic morals, as well as the forms of parental involvement that support or hinder these character-building processes. Through a qualitative approach, the study identifies not only the methods of character formation implemented at TPA Al-Ikhlas but also the internal and external factors that influence their effectiveness. By doing so, the research contributes to the broader discourse on early childhood Islamic education and its potential in fostering a generation that is both religiously grounded and ethically sound in facing contemporary social challenges.

2. Methodology

This research is classified as field research, which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of the Al-Ikhlas Quranic Education Center (TPA) in Mojo Wetan and the factors that support or hinder the character development of children attending the institution. These factors include internal aspects, such as teaching methods and the quality of educators, as well as external elements, such as the family and community environment. The research approach employed is phenomenological. This approach allows the researcher to deeply explore the experiences and perceptions of the subjects regarding the role of TPA Al-Ikhlas in shaping character among children in Mojo Wetan Village, Sragen. By employing appropriate data collection methods and rigorous analysis, the researcher seeks to present an accurate and comprehensive portrayal of the subjects' lived experiences and insights.

The subjects in this study include children enrolled at TPA Al-Ikhlas in Mojo Wetan Village, along with their parents or guardians. Data were collected using three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation method was conducted directly at the site, focusing on how character development is integrated into daily TPA activities. Researchers observed the attitudes and behaviors of children, as well as how teachers guided them through activities intended to cultivate commendable morals and manners. The interview method involved in-depth interviews with teachers (ustadz), focusing on their strategies for instilling character values, the content of religious teachings, and their perceptions of the driving and inhibiting factors in the character formation process. Additional interviews were conducted with parents or guardians to explore their perceptions of the TPA's role in their children's moral development, the changes they observed in their children, and their expectations regarding the educational process at the TPA.

The documentation method involved collecting written materials relevant to the study, such as institutional records, student data, and other documents that describe the operational and pedagogical aspects of TPA Al-Ikhlas in Mojo Wetan Village. To analyze the data, the study applied two qualitative analysis techniques. First, descriptive analysis was used to provide a general overview of the characteristics of the students, TPA programs, and character-building practices. For instance, basic descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and percentiles were used where

applicable. Second, content analysis was employed to interpret qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. This involved identifying emerging themes and patterns, supported by relevant quotes from participants, to interpret the experiences and perspectives of those involved in the educational process. One of the primary data collection methods was the structured, in-depth interview with the ustadz. The interview questions were designed to address key issues surrounding character formation. The table below outlines the questions posed to the teachers and summarizes their responses:

Table 1. Observation Interview

No.	Interview Question	Summary of Ustadz's Answer
1	What is your understanding of character formation?	An effort in educating students to instill foundational character values to become shalih and shalihah individuals.
2	What efforts do you undertake in shaping character?	Explaining that the best among people are those with the best character; conducting routine monthly Islamic study sessions; providing practical moral lessons such as manners toward elders.
3	What kinds of materials are delivered to build character?	Stories and exemplary lessons from the Prophets, companions, and righteous generations to serve as role models.
4	How is the character of students after joining TPA Al-Ikhlas?	Students show positive changes; many take active roles such as leading adzan, giving kulum, cleaning the mosque, and leading TPQ groups.
5	What are the inhibiting factors in students' character formation?	Parental habits and home environment that lack exemplary behavior.
6	Do all parents support TPA activities? If yes, in what forms?	Yes, they provide ideas, suggestions, and even funding for mosque and TPA programs.

Table 1 presents the results of structured interviews conducted with ustadz at TPA Al-Ikhlas, which were aimed at exploring the key aspects of character formation among students. The questions were designed to uncover the teachers' understanding of character education, the methods and materials they employed, the observed outcomes among students, and the external factors that support or hinder character development. From the responses, it can be seen that character formation is perceived as a deliberate and continuous effort to instill foundational Islamic values that produce pious and morally upright children. The teachers implement various approaches such as routine religious study sessions, storytelling of exemplary figures in Islam, and practical etiquette lessons to cultivate positive behavior.

They also noted significant improvements in student attitudes and involvement in mosque activities. However, they identified a lack of parental role modeling as a major inhibiting factor. Encouragingly, parental involvement in supporting TPA programs was described as strong, both in terms of moral and material support. These insights offer a clear view of how character education is operationalized at the grassroots level through Islamic institutions like TPA Al-Ikhlas, serving as a foundation for deeper analysis in this study. In table 1 in addition to interviews, observation techniques were applied by directly observing the attitudes and

behaviors of students during TPA activities, including how religious routines were implemented and how moral values were instilled in everyday practice. Documentation was used to gather data from written sources, including TPA profiles, student records, and related institutional documents.

3. Results and Discussion

The Role of the Al-Quran Education Park in Forming Children's Character at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque

Character is a key aspect in shaping a person's qualities, enabling them to become individuals of noble character. When these qualities are cultivated continuously, individuals can grow into people who contribute positively to their surroundings and the progress of the nation (Utami, 2015). Character is often associated with terms such as ethics, morals, and values, as they are all closely related to moral strength. These terms generally carry a positive connotation rather than a neutral one. In the context of Islam, character education is synonymous with moral-based religious education. Islam emphasizes the importance of nurturing Muslims with noble morals and ethical conduct (Kurniawan, 2017).

Morals and character are essential because they encompass three fundamental components: knowledge, attitude, and behavior. These components determine whether a person can be regarded as truly human. Character refers to the core nature, traits, and essential qualities of a person, though these are often abstract and difficult to measure directly. Nevertheless, strong character building efforts can lead to the creation of peaceful, harmonious, and safe environments (La Adu, 2014).

Quranic Education Parks (TPA) serve not only as religious learning facilities, but also as strategic institutions for shaping children's character and personality from an early age. Through structured programs, a nurturing atmosphere, and consistent educational activities, TPAs provide a vital foundation for instilling moral, social, and independent values that are essential for the holistic development of a child. In an interview, Ustadz 1, a TPA teacher, stated that character education is:

The effort to educate students aims to instill basic character values to develop pious and righteous students.

Meanwhile, an interview with Ms. Itta Herawati, a parent of a TPA student, stated that:

Character education is the process of shaping a child's personality through instilling moral values, ethics, and good habits from an early age. The goal is for children to grow into responsible, honest, disciplined individuals who are able to live empathetically in society.

Likewise, the interview with Mr. Agung Pramono stated:

Character can be defined as behavior, traits, etc., and it must be developed from an early age so that children can become devoted to their parents and society, and useful to themselves and others.

Al-Ghazali explained character education using the term *akhlak*, which he distinguished into two types: good morals (*al-khuluq al-hasan*) and bad morals (*al-khuluq as-sayyi'*). According to him, morals are not static but can change. This means that morals can be formed and developed through a learning process, namely by training the soul to consistently carry out actions in accordance with expected moral values. (Dirsa & Kusumawati, 2019)

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that the Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPA) not only focuses on Qur'anic recitation but also plays a significant role in providing character education from an early age, particularly within the community environment. Through the instillation of moral values, ethics, and good habits, students are guided to grow into responsible, honest, disciplined, and empathetic individuals. The moral values conveyed by both the *ustadz* and the students' parents align with the perspectives of relevant experts. Therefore, this character formation serves as a fundamental pillar in shaping individuals who are devoted to their parents, beneficial to society, and capable of making positive contributions to their surrounding environment. The efforts and materials provided to students in character building at the Al-Ikhlâs TPA have their own methods. The researcher's interview with Ustadz 1 revealed:

There are several things we do:

- 1. We understand the concept that the best people are those with the best morals.*
- 2. In addition to the ongoing afternoon TPQ (religious study group), Al-Ikhlâs Mosque holds regular monthly religious study groups with rotating Asatidz (Ustadz 2, Ustadz 3, Ustadz 4, and Ustadz 5).*
- 3. We provide practical materials for students, such as how to walk in front of elders, how to speak to elders, and how to greet them when meeting.*
- 4. We deliver materials related to exemplary stories from the Prophets, companions, and future generations, hoping that through these exemplary lessons, students will learn to emulate the teachings.*

Meanwhile, an interview with Ms. Asih Riyanti, a parent of a TPA student, stated that:

Guiding children about what is good and bad for their future includes providing space for them to learn the Quran, attend TPA, and play with children of their own age.

Similarly, an interview with Ms. Noni Wahyundari stated that:

Setting a good example, giving advice or examples from everyday stories (analogies) and stories of the Prophet's companions, and teaching discipline.

Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that the efforts of the ustadz and the parents or guardians of the students in developing character and noble morals in children involve several strategic steps. These include providing an understanding of the importance of morals as a benchmark for human dignity; holding regular religious activities such as TPQ (Islamic Religious Education) and monthly study groups with competent teachers; and directly teaching the practice of etiquette in daily life. This approach is reinforced by role models, meaningful advice, and inspirational stories that are relevant to the children's lives, while also ensuring a balanced environment between learning, worship, and play. All of these efforts aim to form a disciplined, polite, and well-mannered personality from an early age.

Islamic religious education is a process of spiritual and moral development aimed at forming a complete human being (*insan kamil*). Lubis & Widiawati (2020), referring to Al-Ghazali's view, state that every child is born pure or *fitrah*. Therefore, it is the responsibility of education to foster, maintain, and guide this potential so that it develops in accordance with good values. From the moment a child is born, both parents play a crucial role in shaping positive behavior and moral values (Ruli, 2020). Therefore, the involvement of parents is essential in shaping their child's character, especially through the internalization of Islamic educational values within the family environment to foster an Islamic personality.

Religious education, in this context, focuses on the role of Islam in shaping one's personality and moral foundation. At TPA Al-Ikhlas, Islamic religious education serves as the primary platform for character development. By learning the Qur'an, understanding Islamic teachings, and engaging in worship, students are guided to internalize religious values that influence their behavior in daily life. Parental support in character formation varies. Each parent has a method tailored to their child's personality. Parental communication influences their child's understanding and attitudes. The researcher's interviews with parents are as follows:

I tell my child to immediately pray when I hear the call to prayer. When my child is playing games or doing something else, I immediately approach him to pray in congregation at the mosque. When the time for Quran recitation approaches, I also remind him to prepare for it.

Ustadz 1, regarding the interview results, stated:

Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God), he is very supportive. This is evident in the fact that when the call to prayer sounds, the children immediately go to the mosque to pray in congregation. When there are mosque activities, the guardians of the students provide support with ideas, suggestions, and even funding.

The author demonstrates an active role in guiding children to be disciplined in worship, especially in prayer and Qur'an recitation. With a consistent approach and full support from both parents and the community, children become accustomed to

performing congregational prayers at the mosque as soon as the call to prayer is heard, and to preparing for Qur'anic recitation activities. Parental and guardian support for mosque programs is also very positive, both in terms of ideas, suggestions, and financial contributions reflecting strong community solidarity in fostering a religious generation.

Driving and Inhibiting Factors in Character Formation

Character refers to a person's attitudes and behaviors shaped through education received from several key environments: the family, school, and society. The word "character" carries a similar meaning to "personality." Personality is considered a critical aspect of a person, and it can serve as a strong motivator in character formation, particularly when grounded in the belief in the truth of religious values (Pridayani & Rivauzi, 2022).

Within this process, there are factors that support the development of positive character and others that hinder it. Identifying both the driving and inhibiting factors is essential to creating an environment conducive to children's moral growth. According to an interview with Ustadz 1, the environment and the habits of parents who fail to model good behavior can serve as both driving and inhibiting factors.

Meanwhile, one of the parents stated that driving factors include a positive environment such as those found in family, home, and school and a sound, Islam-based education, both formal and informal (such as at the TPA). Conversely, inhibiting factors include an unsupportive environment for Islamic teachings, lack of parental attention, and the growing influence of digital devices.

Children's character formation is profoundly affected by environmental factors and the behaviors modeled by parents or guardians. A constructive environment and Islamic education, both inside and outside formal institutions, serve as key catalysts for instilling Islamic values in children. However, the absence of role models, the negative influence of technology, and an unsupportive environment remain significant obstacles. Thus, collaboration between family, school, and community is vital to creating a supportive context for children's Islamic character development.

The role of TPA Al-Ikhlas in Mojo Wetan Village, RT 04, RW 03, is pivotal not only in teaching Qur'anic literacy but also in promoting early character education. By instilling moral values, ethics, and noble character traits through habituation and daily reinforcement, students are shaped into responsible, honest, disciplined, and empathetic individuals. The implementation of various strategies including regular religious activities, daily etiquette practice, and moral storytelling serves to strengthen this process.

Nonetheless, the success of character development is closely tied to the influence of the surrounding environment and the involvement of parents. While supportive environments and Islamic education are essential drivers, a lack of exemplary figures, excessive technological distractions, and poor home support systems

present challenges. For this reason, synergy between the TPA, families, and the wider community is necessary to build a generation that is religiously devout and socially responsible.

4. Conclusion

The Al-Ikhlas Quranic Education Park (TPA) in Mojo Wetan Village, RT 04, RW 03, plays a vital role in shaping children's character from an early age. Beyond teaching Qur'anic recitation, the TPA actively nurtures moral values, ethics, and noble traits in its students. As a result, children are guided to grow into responsible, honest, disciplined, and socially engaged individuals. Efforts to build character are realized through various approaches, including the internalization of Islamic moral values, routine religious activities, etiquette instruction, and the provision of real-life examples and meaningful advice. These strategies are intentionally integrated into the educational environment to influence children both cognitively and behaviorally.

However, the effectiveness of these efforts depends greatly on support from the environment and active parental participation. A positive community atmosphere and continuous Islamic instruction act as key drivers, while weak role modeling, the negative effects of technology, and an unsupportive family context serve as barriers. Therefore, ongoing collaboration between the TPA, families, and community members is essential to nurturing a generation that upholds noble character, strong faith, and a willingness to make positive contributions to their surroundings.

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