



Strengthening the Islamic Character of Children and Adolescents through TPQ-Based Religious Development Program in Baubau City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyze the processes of strengthening Islamic character among children and adolescents through Qur'anic education at TPQ Kedai Ilmu in Baubau City. The research focuses on identifying the forms, strategies, and outcomes of character development implemented by teachers in shaping the noble personality of the santri. A descriptive qualitative approach with a single case study design was adopted. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that TPQ Kedai Ilmu plays a strategic role in reinforcing Islamic character in an era marked by globalization and the rapid flow of values. In conclusion, the character education model implemented at TPQ Kedai Ilmu demonstrates that non-formal Qur'anic-based learning can significantly strengthen Islamic character through a holistic integration of faith, knowledge, and practice. This model has strong potential to be adopted as a prototype for Islamic character education in similar non-formal learning settings across Indonesia. Future development is recommended through strengthening parental involvement, expanding community-based collaboration, and establishing measurable character assessment instruments to support long-term sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of Islamic character of children and adolescents is the main foundation in building a generation with noble character and Qur'anic personality. In the context of modern society that is being hit by the flow of value globalization, non-formal educational institutions such as the Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPQ) have a strategic role in maintaining the Islamic identity and morality of the younger generation. Character education basically emphasizes not only the cognitive aspect, but also the affective and psychomotor aspects that are in harmony with Islamic spiritual values (Susilo, 2024).

In the midst of technological advances and rapid information flows, there are great challenges in instilling the values of manners and morals in children. The formation of Islamic character is becoming increasingly urgent because of the many global cultural influences that can weaken the morality and spirituality of the younger generation. Therefore, TPQ exists as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that not only focuses on teaching the reading of the Qur'an but also serves as a center for moral development and the cultivation of Islamic values (Rahmat et al., 2024).

In the implementation of activities at TPQ, character values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and cooperation are instilled through the process of habituation and example of ustaz and ustazah. The learning process at TPQ does not stop at mastering aspects of reading and memorizing the Qur'an, but is also directed at the formation of behaviors that reflect Qur'anic values in daily life (Yunita, 2023).

Several studies show that Islamic educational institutions have a significant role in building the character of students. (Darlan et al., 2021) emphasized that Islamic education in Indonesian formal schools has contributed to the formation of students' character, although there are still challenges in strengthening the social and spiritual dimensions. Meanwhile, a study at TPQ Miftahul Ulum shows that character development through Qur'an learning activities can shape children's morality through habits and continuous guidance (Musyaropah & Ritonga, 2024).

The TPQ program in Baubau City has unique characteristics because it is in the midst of a religious but dynamic society. With a total of around 30 students—consisting of 8 children in the Qur'an stage and 22 children still in the Iqra' stage—the coaching process is carried out through a comprehensive approach, including learning activities, examples, and habituation in daily worship. This is in line with the concept of Islamic education, which emphasizes the balance between knowledge, faith, and charity (Anwar, 2024). Furthermore, Khoiriyah (2023) explained that integrating character values in the Islamic education curriculum is a strategic effort to form people of faith, piety, and noble character (Dewi, 2025). In this context, TPQ is not only an institution for teaching the Qur'an, but also a forum for community-based Islamic character development involving families, communities, and religious leaders (Muthoifin et al, 2024).

Thus, this study seeks to examine in depth how the religious development program at TPQ can be an effective means in strengthening the Islamic character

of children and adolescents in Baubau City. This research is expected to make a conceptual and practical contribution in enriching the treasures of Islamic-based character education, which is oriented towards strengthening the morality and spirituality of the younger generation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character Education in Islamic and General Perspectives

Character education in Islam integrates *'ilm* (knowledge), *īmān* (faith), and *'amal* (practice), aiming at holistic development of spiritual, moral, and behavioural dimensions. Several contemporary studies emphasize this tripartite orientation as the foundation of Islamic character formation (Anwar, 2024; Khoiriyah, 2023). In general educational theory, Lickona (1991) highlights three essential components of character development: moral knowing (cognitive), moral feeling (affective), and moral action (behavioural/psychomotor). This framework aligns closely with Islamic pedagogical perspectives, making it a relevant combined theoretical lens for analysing the role of TPQ in character development.

Non-Formal Islamic Institutions (TPQ) as Centers of Moral Formation

Non-formal Qur'anic educational institutions such as TPQ are widely recognised as strategic community-based centers for fostering Islamic values and moral behaviour, extending beyond the goals of Qur'an literacy alone (Rahmat et al., 2024; Musyaropah & Ritonga, 2024). Empirical findings show that TPQ programs contribute significantly to strengthening students' daily religious practice, social interaction, and moral discipline through integrative learning and guidance (Yunita, 2023). Darlan et al. (2021) argue that Islamic education outside formal school systems plays a complementary role in character strengthening, especially in aspects that are not optimally addressed in formal curricula.

Mechanisms of Character Formation: Habituation, Modelling, and Community Engagement

A recurring theme in literature is the crucial role of habituation and modelling in shaping children's moral behaviour. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) explains that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. This supports practices commonly applied in TPQ settings, where *ustaz* and *ustazah* model noble manners, worship practices, and interpersonal ethics. Repeated performance of religious practices such as salat, Qur'an recitation, and communal discipline nurtures stable behavioural habits, forming character internally and externally (Susilo, 2024; Musyaropah & Ritonga, 2024). Community support particularly from families and neighbourhood religious leaders functions as reinforcement to maintain learned behaviour outside classroom settings (Muthoifin et al., 2024).

Globalization, Technology, and Challenges to Moral Development

Modern literature highlights increasing moral challenges due to globalization and digital culture, characterized by rapid access to global values and social influences that may conflict with Islamic morals (Susilo, 2024). This situation accelerates the urgency of intentional character-formation efforts within Islamic educational institutions. Research suggests that TPQs equipped with

contextual teaching, parental partnership, and media literacy strategies achieve better outcomes in helping students navigate conflicting values and contemporary ethical issues (Rahmat et al., 2024). Thus, TPQ is positioned as a moral stronghold within rapidly changing digital environments.

Curriculum Integration and Pedagogical Approaches

Effective character development in TPQ is strongly linked to curriculum integration. Khoiriyah (2023) and Dewi (2025) highlight that inserting character values explicitly into lesson planning and classroom activities enables internalization through both instruction and practice. Studies document that Qur'an-centered character programs succeed when combined with practical learning strategies including *halaqah*, mentoring, peer collaboration, and community service, ensuring the balance between knowledge, faith, and action (Anwar, 2024; Muthoifin et al., 2024).

Outcomes and Evaluation Challenges

Research findings generally indicate positive outcomes of TPQ character programs, including improved discipline, moral behaviour, honesty, and cooperation among children. However, many studies face methodological limitations such as small sample sizes, lack of longitudinal tracking, and reliance on self-report data. Musyaropah and Ritonga (2024) report significant behavioural improvements through continuous Qur'an-learning based character coaching but note the need for stronger measurement tools. Darlan et al. (2021) emphasize that future research should adopt mixed-method approaches to capture cognitive, affective, and behavioural changes comprehensively.

Gaps in the Current Literature and Relevance of This Study

Although numerous studies validate the role of TPQ in moral development, there remain substantial research gaps. First, most studies are single-site and lack analytical comparisons across diverse socio-cultural contexts. Second, limited research specifically examines TPQ programs in regions experiencing modern socio-cultural dynamics such as Baubau City. Third, little work investigates how specific program components such as role modelling, habituation, curriculum integration, and community involvement individually contribute to character development. Additionally, evaluation tools for measuring long-term impact require improvement.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the implementation of Islamic character formation programs at TPQ in Baubau City, analysing the mechanisms and effectiveness of role modelling, habituation, and community support. The findings are expected to provide both conceptual and practical contributions to the field of Islamic-based character education, particularly in strengthening morality and spirituality among children and adolescents.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the process of strengthening the Islamic character of children and adolescents through a TPQ-based religious development program in Baubau City. This approach was chosen because it focuses on meaning, values, and social experiences happening in the field. The research design used is a single

case study, with the research location at TPQ Kedai Ilmu Kota Baubau, Southeast Sulawesi. TPQ is a non-formal educational institution that is active in fostering reading and writing the Qur'an and strengthening the character of students. The research subjects consisted of thirty students aged between six and fifteen years, which were divided into eight students at the Qur'an learning level and twenty-two students at the Iqra' stage. Key informants include the head of TPQ, the supervisory ustadzah, and representatives of the parents of the students who were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in coaching activities.

Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out to observe learning activities, memorization, and worship habits that reflect Islamic character values. The interview was used to explore the understanding and experience of the coaches as well as the responses of students and parents to the character changes that occurred. Meanwhile, documentation in the form of activity archives, photos, learning schedules, and student development records were used as supporting data to strengthen the findings.

Data analysis is carried out interactively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. This process takes place continuously during data collection to find patterns, meanings, and relationships between categories that are relevant to the research objectives. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, re-examination of the results of interviews with informants (member checking), and peer discussions (peer debriefing) with other researchers in the field of Islamic education. These measures ensure that the research results remain valid, credible, and scientifically accountable.

Activities to strengthen the Islamic character of children and adolescents at TPQ Kedai Ilmu Kota Baubau are carried out through a program of fostering reading the Qur'an and strengthening morals, which is systematically designed based on the needs of students. This activity lasts for five weeks, from September 29 to October 30, 2025, with a frequency of twice per week.

Form and Stages of Activity

The implementation of activities is carried out through the following stages:

1. Preparation Stage: Includes coordination with TPQ administrators, identification of students' initial ability to read the Qur'an, as well as preparation of learning materials and media (mushaf, iqra, whiteboard, and evaluation form).
2. Implementation Stage: The main activities include *tahsinul qira'ah* (improvement of Qur'an recitation), introduction and application of basic tajweed knowledge, development of Qur'anic reading manners, and instilling love for the Qur'an through Qur'anic motivation.
3. Evaluation Stage: Measure the improvement of students' abilities through Qur'an reading tests and behavioral observations during activities.
4. Closing Stage: Ending with *muhasabah* and joint prayer activities to foster the spirit of istiqamah in reading the Qur'an.
5. Implementation Method

The method used refers to the principles of *education through habituation and guidance*, namely:

1. Talaqqi and Musyafahah: Students read directly in front of the coach to improve makhraj and tajweed.
2. Interactive Lecture: The presenter delivers the material briefly and dialogically so that participants actively ask questions and discuss.
3. Exercises and Drills: Students are trained repeatedly to improve their fluency and reading accuracy.
4. Practice Evaluation: Each weekend an individual assessment is conducted to measure the development of abilities.
5. Motivation and Example (Uswah Hasanah): The coach provides spiritual encouragement and becomes an example in reading the Qur'an with tartil.
6. Media and Means

This activity uses several supporting facilities such as the Qur'an mushaf, Iqra books, whiteboards, markers, loudspeakers, and evaluation forms. Visual media such as recitation recordings and tajweed slides are used to strengthen students' understanding of the laws of reading.

Evaluation Techniques

Evaluation is carried out through observation, interviews, and practical tests.

Aspects evaluated include:

1. The ability to read the Qur'an according to the rules of tajweed.
2. Accuracy of makhraj and short reading.
3. Religious attitude, discipline, and love for the Qur'an.

The results of the evaluation showed that there was an increase in students' ability to read the Qur'an both in terms of pronunciation and understanding of tajweed, as well as the growth of the spirit of learning and a sense of responsibility in maintaining the manners of the Qur'an.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of TPQ Kedai Ilmu Bau-Bau

TPQ Kedai Ilmu is one of the non-formal educational institutions in Baubau City that is engaged in the field of education and guidance of the Qur'an for children and adolescents. This institution is one of the important forums for the surrounding community in instilling Islamic values in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization and technological advances that have an impact on changing the behavior of the younger generation.

This TPQ has a total of 30 students, consisting of 8 students who have studied the Qur'an (recitation stage) and 22 students who are still studying Iqra. Learning activities are carried out every afternoon, after the Asar prayer until before Maghrib. The learning atmosphere takes place in a family atmosphere, accompanied by the habituation of manners and time discipline.

The main focus of TPQ Kedai Ilmu is not only to teach the ability to read the Qur'an, but also to form Islamic character through the cultivation of the values of faith, manners, and responsibility. This is in line with the view (Anwar, 2024) that Islamic education has the main purpose of forming human beings who have faith, knowledge, and noble character, not just to transfer knowledge.

Forms and Strategies for Islamic Character Development

Islamic character development at TPQ Kedai Ilmu is carried out with a simple but systematic strategy, combining value *education*, exemplary (*uswah hasanah*), and *habituation*.

Habit of Daily Worship and Prayer

Each activity begins and ends with a joint prayer. Students are trained to maintain ablution, perform prayers on time, read short dhikr, and memorize daily prayers. This routine activity aims to instill spiritual awareness from an early age. As explained by (Yunita, 2023) The habit of repeated worship can form a pattern of religious behavior that is the basis of Islamic character in children's lives.



The Example of Ustadz and Ustadzah

The coaches become role models in behavior, speech, and attitude. Ustadz/ustadzah always try to arrive early, look neat, and treat the students with affection. According to (Darlan et al., 2021), a good teacher's personality is a reflection of Islamic values that must be exemplified to students so that the internalization of moral values runs effectively.



Halaqah and Discussion of Moral Values

Every week, TPQ holds halaqah with the theme "Adab and Akhlakul Karimah," which is packaged in a light and interactive way. Children are invited to understand the verses of the Qur'an related to manners to parents, teachers, and fellow friends. This activity refers to the integrative approach, as stated (N. Khoiriyah, 2023) that character learning through Islamic education must combine cognitive (value understanding), affective (appreciation), and psychomotor (practice) aspects.



Social Activities and Mutual Cooperation

As a form of social education, students are accustomed to working together to clean the study room, arrange prayer mats, and help friends who have difficulty reading Iqra. This habit develops empathy and a sense of social responsibility, as stated by Dewi (2025) that children's social character can grow through collaborative activities and services in a learning environment oriented to Islamic values.



Strengthening the Value of Honesty and Trust

TPQ Kedai Ilmu also accustomed children to be honest in small things, such as reporting if they forgot to bring books, returned items, or not lie when memorizing. (Muthoifin et al., 2024) emphasizing that the value of honesty is the main foundation in building an Islamic personality, because morality is a reflection of the integrity of faith and charity.



Results of Field Observations and Interviews

The results of observations during the implementation of the activity showed a change in positive behavior among students. Children who initially tend to be passive begin to show enthusiasm for learning, are diligent in attending, and enthusiastically participate in every activity.

Some of the success indicators observed include:

1. Students are more disciplined in coming to TPQ on time.
2. Increased ability to read Iqra and the Qur'an.
3. Students are more polite in talking and interacting with teachers and friends.
4. The children began to show concern for the cleanliness of the TPQ environment.

One of the ustadzah stated that *"after the practice of joint prayer and the exemplary story of the Prophet's companions, children become more manageable and more responsive when reminded."* These findings reinforce the view that the formation of Islamic character is not only through the delivery of theories, but requires real models and figures that children emulate every day.

In addition, coaching at TPQ Kedai Ilmu also has an emotional and spiritual dimension, because children feel cared for and appreciated. They gain religious experiences that are not only cognitive, but heartfelt. According to Anwar (2024), spiritual experiences experienced directly are an important element in forming an Islamic character that is resistant to negative environmental influences.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the activity showed that the approach of Islamic character development at TPQ Kedai Ilmu Kota Baubau was effective in forming positive behavior of children and adolescents. The increase in discipline, responsibility, and politeness of students can be seen from changes in attitudes during learning activities, both in worship, cleanliness, and social interaction. This approach affirms that community-based Islamic education (*community-based Islamic education*) can be a relevant strategy in instilling moral and spiritual values from an early age (Arifuddin et al., 2023).

This coaching model places TPQ not only as a place to learn to read the Qur'an, but also as a center for the formation of religious and social character. This is in line with the findings (Suhardin et al., 2023) that effective Islamic education emphasizes active engagement between institutions, families, and communities. At TPQ Kedai Ilmu, collaboration between ustadz, parents, and community leaders is the main strength in supporting children's character development. This pattern is in line with (Khoiriyah, 2023), which states that the integration of home, school, and social environment education is the foundation of the success of children's Islamic character.

The coaching at TPQ Kedai Ilmu also illustrates the real application of the concept of *uswah hasanah*, which is to make educators a moral example for students. This principle is rooted in the words of Allah in Q.S. Al-Ahzab, verse 21:

"Indeed, the Messenger of Allah has set a good example for all of you who hope for Allah's mercy and the Day of Resurrection."

The concept of exemplary is in accordance with Bandura's social learning theory, (1977) which explains that human behavior is formed through the process of observation and imitation of figures that are considered ideal. In the context of TPQ, ustadz and ustadzah act as a model of behavior that reflects the values of honesty, patience, and discipline, so that students learn not only cognitively, but also affectively and psychomotorly. (Darlan et al., 2021)

These findings also strengthen the theory of integrative Islamic education as put forward by (Muthoifin et al., 2024) that the formation of Islamic character must be based on the integration of faith, knowledge, and charity. At TPQ Kedai Ilmu, activities such as moral halaqah, muhadharah, worship practices, and the stories of the Prophet's companions are concrete means to balance these three aspects. This approach is in line with the view (Kurniawan et al., 2023) that Islamic character education must touch three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

These strategies proved effective in fostering religious behaviour, discipline, responsibility, and social care among participants. This program model not only develops Qur'anic literacy but also internalizes spiritual and moral values as the foundation of daily life. The results of the study clearly indicate that the implementation of character strengthening strategies at TPQ Kedai Ilmu has produced observable behavioural changes among the students. During the observation period, students demonstrated a noticeable increase in punctuality and attendance consistency, reflecting stronger discipline and responsibility. Teachers also noted significant improvement in students' manners, such as showing respect by greeting teachers, seeking permission politely, and maintaining cleanliness in the learning environment. These behavioural transformations verify the effectiveness of habituation and exemplary modelling in shaping Islamic character.

In addition, the results of this activity support the research of Furqon & Hanif (2022) who found that character education based on Islamic values is able to strengthen students' moral resilience in the face of rapid social change. Habituation of worship, social training, and community activities at TPQ Kedai Ilmu is also in line with the results of Ramadan & Fitrisia (2023) which emphasizes the importance of local values and religious culture in character education.

From the sociological aspect, TPQ Kedai Ilmu plays a role as a social and spiritual agent of the community. Its function is not only to produce memorizers of the Qur'an, but also to form a generation that has social sensitivity, mutual cooperation, and solidarity. These findings are in line with The Goddess (2025), which states that the TPQ institution is an effective means of strengthening socio-religious identity in modern society. Even Alhamdani (2022) emphasizes that the Islamic character that grows through the grassroots educational environment is more durable because it is built on the basis of habituation and social experience. Furthermore, theoretically, the results of this activity strengthen the idea of contemporary Islamic character education that is contextual and responsive to the challenges of globalization (Alhamuddin, 2025). The TPQ Kedai Ilmu model

shows that character strengthening can be done without large infrastructure, but through example, community participation, and the sincerity of the coaches (Sa'diah et al., 2024). Thus, the coaching program at TPQ Kedai Ilmu can be used as a model of national replication for similar institutions. A community-based approach that emphasizes the synergy between faith, knowledge, and charity has proven effective in shaping a moral, intelligent, and competitive young generation, while maintaining spiritual values in the midst of a global trend that tends to be materialistic.

CONCLUSION

Community empowerment activities through the TPQ Kedai Ilmu Baubau program show that non-formal educational institutions based on the Qur'an have an important role in shaping the Islamic character of children in the midst of the social dynamics of modern society. Through structured learning including memorization of the Qur'an, worship practices, and strengthening of moral *karimah* children not only acquire religious knowledge cognitively, but also experience the process of habituating Islamic values that touch the affective and psychomotor realms. The results of the evaluation of the activity showed an increase in worship discipline, social concern, and a sense of responsibility among students.

The success of this activity is inseparable from the synergy between *ustaz/ustazah*, parents, and the surrounding community. Teachers play a role model (*uswah hasanah*) in instilling Islamic values, while parents play a role in strengthening children's worship habits at home. The involvement of local communities and religious leaders has helped create a social environment conducive to the growth of Islamic morality. This support makes TPQ Kedai Ilmu not only a place to learn to read the Qur'an, but also a center for character development and the formation of Islamic identity for children in Baubau City. Overall, this program makes a real contribution to efforts to strengthen the moral and spiritual resilience of the young generation in the era of globalization. TPQ Kedai Ilmu has succeeded in fostering religious spirit, improving discipline, and instilling the values of honesty, politeness, and responsibility in students. In the future, this success needs to be supported by increasing the capacity of educators, developing technology-based learning media, and continuous support from the community and local governments so that TPQ continues to be a strategic forum in giving birth to a generation of Qur'ani with good morals.

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