



Internalization of Religious Character through Qur'an Extracurricular Activities

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Abstract: *This study examines the internalization of students' religious character through the LPQ (Al-Qur'an Education Institution) extracurricular program at SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh. The program emphasizes comprehensive planning encompassing clear objectives, structured activity design, management responsibilities, scheduling, and appropriate learning environments to develop students' competencies in reading, writing, memorizing, and applying the Qur'an. Classes are organized according to students' proficiency levels, enabling teachers to align instructional complexity with individual learning capacities effectively. The implementation follows a systematic three-stage process: preparation, execution, and closure. Educators employ diverse instructional strategies, including halaqah sessions, memorization exercises, practical worship activities, and interactive educational games, to actively engage students while reinforcing Qur'anic values. Sessions commence with prayers and motivational activities to foster mental and spiritual readiness. Closure activities, encompassing evaluations, question-and-answer sessions, and reflective exercises, strengthen students' ethical conduct, discipline, and spiritual responsibility. Findings reveal measurable improvements in students' religious attitudes, Qur'anic reading proficiency, memorization skills, and participation in religious practices. The study demonstrates that structured, well-planned, and consistently executed extracurricular programs are effective in cultivating students' moral, spiritual, and ethical development, fostering disciplined, responsible, and pious individuals.*

Keywords: Religious Character, Extracurricular, LPQ, Students

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini mengkaji internalisasi karakter religius siswa melalui program ekstrakurikuler LPQ (Lembaga Pendidikan Al-Qur'an) di SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh. Program ini menekankan perencanaan yang komprehensif, meliputi tujuan yang jelas, desain kegiatan yang terstruktur, tanggung jawab pengelolaan, penjadwalan, dan lingkungan belajar yang sesuai untuk mengembangkan kemampuan siswa dalam membaca, menulis, menghafal, dan mengamalkan Al-Qur'an. Kelas dibagi berdasarkan tingkat kemampuan siswa, memungkinkan guru menyesuaikan tingkat kesulitan pembelajaran dengan kapasitas belajar masing-masing. Pelaksanaan program mengikuti tiga tahap sistematis: persiapan, pelaksanaan, dan penutupan. Guru menggunakan strategi pembelajaran beragam, termasuk halaqah, latihan menghafal, praktik ibadah, dan permainan edukatif interaktif, untuk melibatkan siswa secara aktif sekaligus menanamkan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an. Kegiatan diawali dengan doa dan motivasi untuk menyiapkan kesiapan mental dan spiritual siswa. Tahap penutupan, yang meliputi evaluasi, tanya jawab, dan refleksi, memperkuat etika, disiplin, dan tanggung jawab spiritual siswa. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan sikap religius, kemampuan membaca Al-Qur'an, keterampilan menghafal, dan*

partisipasi dalam kegiatan keagamaan. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa program ekstrakurikuler yang terstruktur, terencana, dan konsisten efektif dalam membentuk karakter moral, spiritual, dan etis siswa, serta mendukung pengembangan individu yang disiplin, bertanggung jawab, dan religius.

Kata Kunci: Karakter Religius, Ekstrakurikuler, LPQ, Siswa

INTRODUCTION

National education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character, developing their intellectual and emotional abilities, and building a dignified civilization to enlighten the life of the nation. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that the goal of education is to develop students' potential to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are physically and mentally healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens (Republic of Indonesia, 2003). This underscores that education should not only focus on cognitive aspects but also emphasize character formation as the foundation for students' social and spiritual behavior.

One crucial dimension of character is religious character, which encompasses belief, devotion, and individual spiritual practice. Instilling religious character in students has been shown to improve self-control, discipline, and social empathy (Lickona, 1991). In the context of Islamic education, the Qur'an serves not only as divine guidance but also as a medium for moral, ethical, and spiritual discipline (Al-Ghazali, 2010). Regular practice of reading, understanding, and applying the Qur'an can strengthen faith, piety, and virtuous character among adolescents (Idris, 2018).

Contemporary phenomena indicate a decline in religious practice among adolescents, largely influenced by the dominance of digital devices, social media, and insufficient consistent spiritual guidance (Pew Research Center, 2017). At SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Penuh, this issue is addressed through a flagship religious-based program via the Qur'anic Education Institution (LPQ), which includes Complete Qur'an Reading and Writing (TBTQ), Tahfiz, Tilawah, and Qur'anic recitation arts. These activities are held every Monday and Wednesday after regular school hours, both in the mosque and classrooms, aiming to instill faith, improve skills in reading, writing, memorizing, understanding, interpreting, and practicing the Qur'an, as well as fostering noble character such as piety, social sincerity, tolerance, exemplary

behavior, moderation, and love for the homeland (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

Although various studies have examined the relationship between religious education and child character development, a significant gap remains regarding the effectiveness of Qur'an reading habituation methods in SMPs for developing deeply internalized religious character (Rahman, 2019). Preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 1 Sungai Penuh showed that most seventh-grade students in 2022 faced difficulties reading the Qur'an, rarely participated in religious activities, and tended to spend more time using digital devices for social media or online games. This situation underscores the urgency of research focusing on systematic and sustainable religious education interventions.

The novelty of this study lies in its holistic approach that integrates habituation, Qur'anic reading etiquette, and spiritual guidance within a formal school environment, which remains rarely studied in the Indonesian junior high school context. With consistent habituation and guidance through LPQ, students are expected to internalize religious values profoundly, creating individuals who are faithful, pious, and virtuous, while simultaneously being able to face modern challenges that may reduce their religious practice (Suryani, 2021).

Therefore, this study not only contributes to the development of a Qur'an-based religious character education model in secondary schools but also provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of habituation methods and serves as an important reference for national-level character education policy formulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning the Internalization of Students' Religious Character through LPQ Extracurricular Activities

Planning is a pivotal stage in ensuring the success of any educational program, including extracurricular initiatives aimed at character development. At SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh, observations reveal that the planning process for LPQ (Al-Qur'an Education Institution) activities is conducted with meticulous attention to detail. Administrators and teachers systematically consider

objectives, program structure, management responsibilities, scheduling, locations, and the design of learning activities. The primary aim of these activities is to guide students in reading, writing, memorizing, and applying the Qur'an, fostering the development of strong religious character from an early age. Interviews with the LPQ Chair, Principal, and LPQ supervisors emphasize that these activities are deliberately structured to cultivate students' faith, piety, and understanding of Qur'anic values through a comprehensive and systematic learning process (Rahman, 2019; Suryani, 2021).

The LPQ extracurricular program serves as a flagship initiative for the school, directly aligning with SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh's vision and mission to produce graduates who exhibit noble character while demonstrating proficiency in Qur'anic reading. According to the principal, the program also supports the city government's initiatives in fostering a society grounded in religious values. Organizationally, coordinators are formally appointed through official decrees, with Islamic Religious Education teachers taking the lead, assisted by tahfidz and tilawah instructors who oversee specialized classes. This structured management ensures that the program is delivered effectively and that accountability is maintained at every level of implementation (Terry, 2012; Ahmadi, 2015).

The timing and location of LPQ activities are meticulously organized to maximize participation and learning outcomes. Activities are conducted after regular school hours, every Monday and Wednesday from 13:30 to 15:00, in the school mosque and designated classrooms. Classes are divided according to students' abilities, ranging from Iqra' levels 1–6, tahfidz, to tilawah sessions. This tiered structure allows teachers to tailor instruction according to individual learning levels, ensuring both the effectiveness of lessons and the feasibility of monitoring student progress. By aligning the difficulty of materials with students' capabilities, teachers can provide a balanced learning experience that nurtures both academic competence and spiritual growth (Suharsimi, 2010).

The planning stage also includes consideration of student engagement and motivational strategies. For instance, lesson plans incorporate a mixture of individual and group activities, fostering peer interaction while reinforcing Qur'anic knowledge. The careful orchestration of these plans reflects a broader understanding of educational management theory, which emphasizes that

effective operational planning is essential before program implementation to ensure measurable outcomes and sustainable success (Gagne, 1985; Ahmadi, 2015).

Implementation of the Internalization of Students' Religious Character through LPQ Extracurricular Activities

The implementation of LPQ activities follows a structured three-stage process: preparation, execution, and closure, each designed to reinforce the internalization of religious character.

a. Preparation Stage

During the preparation stage, teachers at SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh engage in a highly detailed and strategic process to ensure that the LPQ extracurricular program achieves its educational and spiritual goals. This process begins with the development of comprehensive lesson plans (RPP) and syllabi that are carefully tailored to match the varying learning levels of students in each class. By designing materials specific to students' abilities, teachers can provide instruction that is both challenging and achievable, which fosters a sense of competence and confidence among learners.

The preparation process involves creating distinct instructional content for the different branches of the program, including TBTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an), tahfidz (memorization of Qur'anic texts), and tilawah (Qur'an recitation). This differentiation allows educators to address the unique learning requirements of each student group, ensuring that instruction is personalized and effective. For instance, beginner-level students in TBTQ classes receive foundational guidance on letter recognition and pronunciation, whereas tahfidz students focus on memorization techniques and proper intonation. Meanwhile, tilawah students develop fluency and expressive recitation skills, enhancing both comprehension and spiritual engagement.

Such meticulous preparation reflects a strong adherence to principles of educational management, highlighting the importance of operational readiness. By planning ahead and structuring materials thoughtfully, teachers can ensure that program delivery aligns with pedagogical standards while simultaneously fulfilling the spiritual objectives of the curriculum. This dual focus on academic excellence and moral development exemplifies the holistic nature of religious education, where intellectual learning and character formation occur simultaneously. In effect, the preparation stage serves as a critical foundation for the success of the LPQ program, setting the stage for meaningful engagement, efficient execution, and sustainable internalization of religious values among students.

b. Execution Stage

During execution, teachers employ a variety of instructional methods to cater to different learning styles and reinforce religious values. These methods include halaqah sessions, practical assignments, memorization exercises, worship practice, and educational games. Learning materials cover Iqra' levels 1–6, daily prayers, tajwid, fiqh, tauhid, and the memorization of Juz 'Amma. The educational process is designed to cultivate religious character through active engagement with Qur'anic teachings. Teachers facilitate student participation by organizing structured learning sessions in which students read, memorize, or recite Qur'anic passages in front of instructors.

However, practical challenges exist. The limited number of instructors relative to students sometimes results in delays, requiring some students to wait their turn, which can reduce engagement. Despite these challenges, the diverse teaching methods employed ensure that students remain mentally and spiritually prepared for learning. Teachers begin each session with prayers, attendance checks, and motivational remarks to enhance students' focus and spiritual readiness. Observations reveal that student enthusiasm is generally high, although time constraints and teacher-student ratios occasionally limit the depth of engagement with all learning materials (Arikunto, 2010; Prihatin, 2017).

c. Closure Stage

The closure stage serves as both a reflective and evaluative phase. Activities include comprehension assessments, Q&A sessions, concluding prayers, and greetings, providing an opportunity for students to internalize lessons and reflect on their personal growth. This stage reinforces the cultivation of ethical behavior, politeness, and discipline, which are integral components of religious character. Despite time limitations, closure activities are conducted flexibly, allowing each student to gain meaningful evaluative experience and reinforcing their awareness of spiritual responsibility—a critical dimension of religious character formation (Sukirman, 2011).

Results of the Internalization of Students' Religious Character through LPQ Extracurricular Activities

The evaluation of LPQ activities demonstrates notable changes in students' attitudes and skills, although these improvements are not uniform across all participants.

a. Attitudinal Outcomes

Observations at SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh indicate that some students show noticeable improvements in their religious attitudes and behaviors. These students demonstrate increased seriousness and discipline in their daily activities, reflecting a growing sense of responsibility and commitment to their spiritual development. Their active participation is evident in various religious practices, such as reciting the Qur'an during class sessions, taking part in tahfidz activities aimed at memorizing portions of the Qur'an, and joining school-organized Islamic commemorative events. Such engagement not only strengthens their familiarity with religious rituals but also fosters a sense of belonging within the school's spiritual community, encouraging peer learning and mutual reinforcement of positive habits.

Teachers have observed that these changes serve as early indicators that the internalization of religious character is taking place among students. This process, however, is gradual and requires continuous support from educators, as a minority of students still exhibit

lower levels of discipline or show less focus during activities. The variation in student response underscores the importance of personalized guidance and consistent reinforcement to ensure that all students benefit from the program.

These findings are consistent with established educational and psychological theories that emphasize the necessity of sustained practice and active supervision in developing religious attitudes. According to Lickona, character formation is not instantaneous but a cumulative result of repeated engagement with ethical and moral practices, guided by attentive educators. Similarly, Arikunto highlights the role of structured supervision in maintaining students' focus and fostering consistent behavioral growth. Together, these insights suggest that the observable improvements in some students are indicative of a broader potential for nurturing disciplined, conscientious, and spiritually aware individuals through well-organized extracurricular programs.

b. Skill Outcomes

In terms of skills, evaluations indicate progressive improvements in Qur'an reading, mastery of tajwid, memorization of short surahs, and proficiency in recitation. While limited teacher availability sometimes necessitates waiting periods, most students exhibit significant advancement, including progression through Iqra' levels and expanded memorization of Juz 'Amma. This demonstrates that repetitive practice combined with diverse learning strategies effectively cultivates religious competencies and enhances overall spiritual development (Gagne, 1985).

Student interviews further highlight perceived benefits, such as increased familiarity with the Qur'an, improved memorization, and enhanced reading fluency. Although some students report minimal immediate change, these findings indicate that internalization of religious character through LPQ is a gradual, progressive process dependent on student engagement and consistent program delivery. Notably, disciplined and actively participating students experience the most significant growth in religious skills and attitudes, highlighting the importance of sustained involvement.

Overall Findings and Recommendations

Overall, findings suggest that the systematic planning, structured implementation, and consistent evaluation of LPQ extracurricular activities are pivotal in fostering students' religious character. The program effectively nurtures both religious attitudes and practical skills, though challenges such as limited teaching staff and high student numbers persist. Recommendations for enhancing the program include increasing the number of instructors, extending activity hours, and introducing additional instructional strategies to accommodate all students effectively (Prihatin, 2017; Suryani, 2021).

Consequently, LPQ extracurricular activities at SMP N 1 Sungai Penuh have proven to be an effective avenue for the internalization of religious character. By engaging students in the reading, writing, memorization, and application of Qur'anic teachings, the program not only strengthens spiritual, ethical, and moral values but also promotes the development of disciplined, responsible, and pious individuals. The findings affirm that structured, well-planned, and consistently executed extracurricular programs play a crucial role in shaping religious character, aligning with national education objectives that prioritize moral and spiritual development (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003; Lickona, 1991).

CONCLUSION

The study shows that careful planning, structured implementation, and consistent evaluation of LPQ extracurricular activities are crucial for developing students' religious character. Thoughtful organization of objectives, schedules, class levels, and learning activities allows teachers to tailor instruction according to students' abilities, promoting both academic and spiritual growth.

The three-stage process of preparation, execution, and closure ensures that students are actively engaged in reading, memorizing, and applying Qur'anic teachings while cultivating ethical behavior, discipline, and spiritual awareness. Despite challenges such as limited teachers and time constraints, the program maintains high student participation and enthusiasm.

Overall, LPQ extracurricular activities effectively foster religious knowledge, skills, and character. Students demonstrate improved attitudes, greater discipline, and enhanced Qur'anic proficiency, indicating that

structured and consistent extracurricular programs are essential for shaping responsible, pious, and morally upright individuals.

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