

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS RELIGIOUS CHARACTER THROUGH MUHAMMADIYAH EDUCATION AT MUHAMMADIYAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 4 MALANG CITY

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Abstrak

Pembinaan karakter Islami dalam implementasi pendidikan kemuhammadiyah bertujuan untuk membentuk individu yang memiliki akhlak mulia sesuai dengan ajaran Islam dan prinsip-prinsip Muhammadiyah. Proses ini tidak hanya berfokus pada pemahaman teori, tetapi juga pada pembentukan sikap dan perilaku yang mencerminkan nilai-nilai Islam atau disebut karakter religius. Penelitian berpendekatan kualitatif dengan wawancara dan dokumentasi kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis Miles and Hubberman ini memperlihatkan bagaimana SD Muhammadiyah 4 Kota Malang menerapkan metode-metode pendidikan yang digunakan oleh Rasulullah SAW dalam pembentukan akhlak atau karakter religius. Ada enam metode yang meliputi Metode keteladanan (al-Uswah al-Hasanah), Metode pembiasaan (Ta'widiyyah), Metode Mauizhah dan nasehat, Metode Kisah (Qashash), Metode Perumpamaan (Amsal) dan Metode hadiah dan hukuman (Tsawab dan Iqab). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki kode etik ditetapkan oleh pemerintah dan mengikuti berbagai pelatihan dari Muhammadiyah agar dapat menjadi teladan yang baik bagi siswa. Kebiasaan-kebiasaan dan perilaku yang baik dibentuk secara bertahap dengan dikuatkan melalui berbagai cerita Rasulullah dan tokoh-tokoh Islam lainnya, nasehat untuk memotivasi terbentuknya perilaku religius, penggunaan perumpamaan-perumpamaan agar mempermudah siswa memahami penjelasan guru, juga hadiah dan hukuman untuk membentuk karakter religius dan mengurangi perilaku negatif yang dapat mengganggu proses terbentuknya karakter religius.

Kata kunci: Strategi, Pembentukan Karakter, Religius Siswa, Pendidikan Kemuhammadiyah, SD Muhammadiyah 4 Kota Malang

Abstract

The development of Islamic character through the implementation of Kemuhammadiyah education aims to shape individuals with noble morals in accordance with Islamic teachings and Muhammadiyah principles. This process not only focuses on theoretical understanding but also emphasizes the formation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values, referred to as religious character. This qualitative research, conducted through interviews and documentation and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, reveals how SD Muhammadiyah 4 Kota Malang applies educational methods used by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in shaping moral and religious character. These include six methods: the Exemplary Method (al-Uswah al-Hasanah), the Habituation Method (Ta'widiyyah), the Advice and Counsel Method (Mauizhah), the Storytelling Method (Qashash), the Parable Method (Amsal), and the Reward and Punishment Method (Tsawab and Iqab). The findings show that teachers adhere to a code of ethics established by the government and participate in various trainings held by Muhammadiyah to serve as role models for students. Good habits and behaviors are developed gradually and reinforced through stories of

the Prophet and other Islamic figures, motivational advice, parables that help students grasp teachers' explanations, and the use of rewards and punishments to foster religious character and reduce negative behaviors that may hinder character development.

Keywords: Strategy, Character Formation, Religious Character, Kemuhammadiyah Education, SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang



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INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental part of developing human resources with integrity and morality. Amid the challenges of the modern era marked by moral crises, value degradation, and the increasingly massive influence of globalization educational institutions are required not only to produce intellectually intelligent generations but also to nurture individuals with strong character, including religious character.¹ Religious character serves as a crucial pillar in shaping students with spiritual awareness, noble character, and the ability to apply religious values in their daily lives.²

As an organization based on Islamic teachings, the core objective of Muhammadiyah is to disseminate Islamic values through education and various social activities. A similar view is expressed by Rusydi, who states that the activities and efforts of Muhammadiyah can be classified into four main areas: a) Religious Affairs, which include providing guidance on matters of creed ('aqidah), worship ('ibadah), morality (akhlaq), and social transactions (mu'amalah) in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as the development of mosques and prayer rooms (mushalla) as places of worship; b) Political Participation, although Muhammadiyah is not a political party nor part of any political party, it actively engages in politics through promoting good and preventing evil (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar) and offering moral, ethical, and virtuous guidance in responding to governmental and societal policies; c) Social and Community Services, which include charitable efforts such as establishing hospitals, maternity clinics, polyclinics, health centers, pharmacies, and orphanages; d) Education, which focuses on integrating the general education system with the pesantren (*Islamic boarding school*) system.

The vision and mission of Muhammadiyah education reflect that the educational process within Muhammadiyah institutions is designed to address various future challenges through the

¹ Natalia Natalia and Taufik Muhtarom, "Peran Teknologi Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Di Era Disrupsi," *Jurnal Nakula : Pusat Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa Dan Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 5 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.61132/nakula.v2i5.1008>.

² Aidah Sari, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Di Sekolah Melalui Kegiatan Pembiasaan Dan Keteladanan," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan* 3, no. 02 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v3i02.1952>.

strategic development of human resources. Within this framework, there are two main aspects that become the focus of development: the strengthening of faith (*iman*) and devotion (*taqwa*) to Allah SWT, and the mastery of science and technology as essential provisions for facing the global era.³

Since its inception, Muhammadiyah has positioned itself as a reformist movement in Islamic thought as well as a movement of *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) and education. This commitment has been realized through the establishment of the Council for Primary and Secondary Education (*Majelis Dikdasmen*) under the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PP Muhammadiyah). According to information from its official website, Muhammadiyah's primary and secondary education functions as a center for educational activities, leadership development, *dakwah*, and service aimed at enlightening the lives of the people and shaping a competitive generation.

The goal of Muhammadiyah Primary and Secondary Education is to nurture students into Muslim individuals who possess faith and devotion to Allah SWT, exhibit noble character, demonstrate skills, self-confidence, discipline, and responsibility, love their homeland, and are capable of developing knowledge and practical skills. All of these efforts are directed toward realizing a society that is excellent, just, prosperous, and blessed by Allah SWT.

One of the most prominent aspects of the role of the Council for Primary and Secondary Education (*Majelis Dikdasmen*) is its serious attention to the primary and secondary levels of education. According to Mubarak, the importance of implementing religious education from an early age lies in its ability to continuously shape an individual's religious character.

A person's spiritual and religious development is greatly influenced by the education, experiences, and practices acquired during childhood. A child is not inherently born with religious traits; rather, religious values grow through interactions and life experiences within the family, school, and community environments.⁴

The more religious experiences a child gains, the greater the likelihood that behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives aligned with religious teachings will form. Conversely, if a child does not receive sufficient religious education and experience during formative years, there is a high probability that they will develop a less positive attitude toward religion in adulthood.⁵

³ A. Mustika Abidin, "Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Pada Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler Melalui Metode Pembiasaan," *DIDAKTIKA: Jurnal Kependidikan* 12, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.30863/didaktika.v12i2.185>.

⁴ Septy Achyanadia, "Peran Teknologi Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Sdm," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.32832/tek.pend.v5i1.486>.

⁵ Edo Dwi Cahyo, "Pendidikan Karakter Guna Menanggulangi Dekadensi Moral Yang Terjadi Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *EduHumaniora | Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Kampus Cibiru* 9, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.17509/eh.v9i1.6150>.

This negative attitude toward religious teachings can affect daily behavior, especially when an individual has limited understanding of religious values.^{6,7} Such conditions may lead to behavioral deviations that conflict with religious, social, and legal norms. Therefore, instilling religious values from an early age is essential so that these values can become deeply embedded in a person's character and shape their religious identity.⁸ Herawan explains that religious character refers to an individual's disposition to consistently use religion as a guide in all aspects of life. A person with this character will adhere firmly to religious teachings in speech and behavior, and will faithfully obey divine commands while avoiding prohibitions.

Religious values, as one of the core elements in character education, are described by the Indonesian Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas) as attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate obedience in practicing one's religion, tolerance toward the religious practices of others, and living in harmony with people of different faiths.⁹ Ngainum Naim further explains that religious values are the internalization and implementation of religious teachings in everyday life.

As previously discussed, religious education that shapes religious character is instilled through various environments, including the family, community, and school. Character education itself is defined as a system for instilling character values in school members that involves components such as knowledge, awareness, willingness, and action in practicing these values toward God Almighty, oneself, others, the environment, and the nation so as to form a holistic human being (*insan kamil*).^{10,11}

Character education is a vital program that must be implemented within formal education at all levels of the national education system. The implementation of character education is expected to support the achievement of the national education goals, namely to nurture students into individuals who are faithful, devoted, possess noble character, are creative, competent, and more.¹²

⁶ Dewi Shara Dalimunthe, "Transformasi Pendidikan Agama Islam: Memperkuat Nilai-Nilai Spiritual, Etika, Dan Pemahaman Keislaman Dalam Konteks Modern," *Al-Murabbi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.62086/al-murabbi.v1i1.426>.

⁷ Maftuhah, "Strategi Pengembangan Literasi Digital Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Dan Kreatif," in *Progressa*, no. 02, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.32616/pgr.v8.2.491.123-131>.

⁸ Agus Salim, Zailani, and Selamat Pohan, "Cultivation of Character Education in the Boarding School System: Case Study of the Tahfiz Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Tanjung Morawa," *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2025).

⁹ Maftuhah Maftuhah, "Pengaruh Metode Tanya Jawab Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Siswa Mata Pelajaran Akidah Akhlaq Kelas IV Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah 06 Brondong Lamongan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.37286/ojs.v7i2.105>.

¹⁰ Ikhwannuddin Maftuhah, *Meningkatkan Kualitas Pembelajaran Pai Melalui Pendekatan Inovatif: Menyongsong Generasi Z*, 08, no. 02 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.32616/pgr.v8.2.497.111-122>.

¹¹ Nur Aeni Ani, "Pendidikan Karakter Untuk Siswa SD Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar* 1, no. 1 (2014).

¹² Nantara Didit, "Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Melalui Kegiatan Di Sekolah Dan Peran Guru," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6 (2022).

SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City, as part of Muhammadiyah's charitable educational endeavors (*amal usaha*), has implemented various strategies for shaping students' religious character through *Kemuhammadiyahan* education. This study aims to explore in depth the strategies employed by the school in developing students' religious character, as well as to examine the effectiveness and challenges encountered in the process.¹³ By understanding the strategies applied, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a relevant and applicable Islamic-based character education model within Muhammadiyah elementary schools.

The above explanation highlights the importance of religious education and Muhammadiyah's contribution to shaping the religious character of students at the elementary level. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the strategies for developing students' religious character through *Kemuhammadiyahan* education at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City and to identify the effectiveness, challenges, and supporting factors in its implementation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used to shape students' religious character through Islamic and *Kemuhammadiyahan* education at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore phenomena within their natural context through verbal and non-numerical descriptions, obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. In line with the views of Bogdan and Taylor, this approach yields descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observed behavior. Furthermore, Moleong asserts that the qualitative approach seeks to holistically and contextually understand the realities experienced by research subjects through various scientific methods.

This research is a single case study, focusing on one institution SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City within a specific time frame. The case study design enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the strategies and character-building processes implemented in the school, particularly through continuous character-building habits instilled within the school environment.

The research site is SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City, which operates on two campuses: Campus I located on Jalan Sudimoro No. 19 Mojolangu, and Campus II on Jalan Simpang KH. Yusuf Perumpuskopad Tasikmadu, Malang City, East Java. The selection of this site was based on several considerations: (1) the presence of a unique character-building concept known as the

¹³ Asiva Noor Rachmayani, *Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Multidispliner (Dialektika Konsep Pendidikan Berbasis Agama Dan Budaya)* *Septiyana, 2015.

"Ten Magic Words," (2) the distinct characteristics of the students compared to other schools, and (3) the school's status as one of the leading elementary schools in Malang City.

Data sources for this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the field through interviews with various informants, including teachers, school administrators, and students. Secondary data include official school documents, curricula, textbooks, and other written sources that support the research process.

The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to gain a direct overview of the implementation of Islamic and *Kemuhammadiyah* educational strategies in shaping students' character within the school environment. Interviews were used to explore the views, experiences, and perceptions of various stakeholders, including teachers, students, and school leaders. Meanwhile, documentation was employed to complement the data by examining relevant official documents, activity reports, and instructional materials.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data display, and data verification. In the data condensation stage, information was selected and focused on aspects relevant to the research objectives. Data were then presented in the form of structured narratives and tables, allowing the researcher to identify key patterns or themes. Data verification was carried out to ensure the accuracy of the findings through cross-checking among various data sources, such as interviews, observations, and official documents.¹⁴

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was performed by comparing information from various stakeholders and at different times of data collection. Methodological triangulation involved using multiple data collection methods for the same sources of information. This approach strengthens the validity of the research findings, especially in revealing the strategies and implementation of religious character formation through the *Kemuhammadiyah* approach at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City.

By applying this research method systematically, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how Islamic education grounded in Muhammadiyah values can effectively and sustainably shape students' character.

¹⁴ Asiva Noor Rachmayani, No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析Title (2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of religious character education requires a well-supported system to ensure optimal outcomes. In this context, the school as a formal educational institution and the subject of this research applies a character-building method modeled after the way the Prophet Muhammad educated his companions. The character formation strategies inspired by the Prophet's example are implemented at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City.

The Exemplary Model (*al-Uswah al-Hasanah*)

Terminologically, *al-uswah* means "a person to be emulated," and its plural form is *usyan*. *Hasanah* means "good" or "virtuous." Therefore, *uswah hasanah* refers to a good example or moral role model. The Qur'an discusses the concept of exemplary conduct in Surah al-Ahzab (33:21) and Surah al-Mumtahanah (60:4), in which the Prophet Muhammad SAW is presented as the ultimate model in attitude and behavior. The method of exemplification involves demonstrating commendable behavior to students in the hope that they will adopt similar behavior. An educator becomes a role model for students by exhibiting *al-akhlaq al-mahmudah* (praiseworthy conduct), such as humility, patience, sincerity, honesty, and by avoiding *al-akhlaq al-madzumah* (reprehensible behavior).

This model provides concrete examples of behavior that should be observed and imitated especially those that align with Islamic teachings. The strategy of using exemplary figures as learning models is also known as observational learning or modeling, a concept developed by Albert Bandura. Bandura explained that people learn behaviors either consciously or unconsciously through observation and imitation of others' conduct. In shaping an individual's character, it is essential to have figures who serve as role models, providing behavioral examples that can be emulated.¹⁵

The process of modeling through exemplary conduct, especially as demonstrated by teachers, aligns closely with the Muhammadiyah education model. Alifuddin states that during its 46th Congress, Muhammadiyah formulated the concept of education as the *Revitalization of Muhammadiyah Education*. Muhammadiyah views education as the preparation of an environment that allows individuals to grow into human beings who recognize the presence of Allah as *Rabb* and who master science, technology, and the arts.

At SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City, teachers are bound by a code of ethics requiring compliance. However, what distinguishes them from teachers in other elementary schools is that, as members of Muhammadiyah, they regularly receive various training programs organized by the organization. These include sessions on Muhammadiyah ideology, how to be an effective Muhammadiyah teacher, the Preamble of Muhammadiyah's Beliefs and Ideals of Life, and Al-

¹⁵ Jhon W. Creswell, "Design Research Kuantitatif Kualitatif," *Annaba*, 2014.

Qur'an Teacher Standardization Training. These trainings aim not only to improve the overall competence of teachers but also to reflect Muhammadiyah's educational commitment to nurturing individuals who are devout to Allah SWT.

To strengthen implementation, Yusuf and Romelah emphasize the importance of empowering educators through ongoing training and mentorship. Teachers must understand Muhammadiyah's principles to effectively deliver instructional content. Periodic curriculum evaluations are also necessary to ensure that integration runs as intended. Assessment should not focus solely on academic outcomes but also on character development such as honesty, discipline, and social awareness.

Islamic character development is also facilitated through the moral example set by teachers and mentors. Teachers act as role models by demonstrating real-life applications of Islamic values, directly influencing students' character formation. They embody Islamic values such as discipline, sincerity, and compassion. A teacher's consistent behavior, aligned with Muhammadiyah principles, provides a positive and lasting influence on students.

The Habituation Method

Etymologically, the term *habituation* is derived from the word *habit*. In the *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* (General Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), *habit* is defined as something customary or usual; something that becomes an inseparable part of daily life. The prefix "pe-" and the suffix "-an" indicate a process, so *pembiasaan* means the process of making something a habit. To develop students with commendable character, the ta'widiyyah method is considered an effective approach. Through this method, students are expected to become accustomed to noble behavior.

The habituation method is an effective strategy for teachers because it helps transform negative habits into positive ones. However, this method requires time, depending on how accustomed students are to practicing such good behavior. This was a method frequently employed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in guiding his companions. For instance, he habituated them to perform congregational prayers, fasting, and other noble deeds.¹⁶

According to Martin et al., the technique and procedure for behavior modification involve altering the environment to better support individual functioning. The physical variables shaping a person's environment are called stimuli, which include people, objects, or events currently present and directly affecting someone's behavior.

¹⁶ Z Arifin, "Evaluasi Pembelajaran: Prinsip, Teknik, Dan Prosedur," in *Remaja Rosdakarya*, preprint, 2017.

To transform behavior such as from not being accustomed to fasting to fasting regularly, or from not performing prayers to praying on time a technique called shaping is needed. *Shaping*, a term from Skinner's behaviorist learning theory, refers to the process of forming new behavior. According to Baharuddin, shaping is a technique aimed at forming new behavior and developing new skills behavior that aligns with established norms, is socially acceptable, and beneficial for the individual's growth. Martin et al. explain that shaping is a procedure used to form behaviors not previously exhibited by an individual as part of behavioral modification. Chaplin also defines shaping as a process of establishing a sequence of steps that eventually lead to the desired response. Baharuddin states that shaping is the process of forming new behavior based on the stimulus provided.

At SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang City, shaping techniques are applied from the beginning of the school day, during learning sessions, outside of class time, and even until dismissal. Each student entering the school is greeted by a teacher and shakes hands with both teachers and fellow students. When heading to their classrooms, students are required to walk in an orderly manner without pushing or engaging in physical contact. Respect toward teachers is instilled both inside and outside the classroom. Students are habituated to perform *Dhuha* and *Dhuhr* prayers on time without being forced. During dismissal, students are also trained to avoid rushing and to wait calmly for their parents within the school area.

This process of behavior modification through shaping has proven successful. After the implementation of shaping, students at SD Muhammadiyah 4 have developed the habit of shaking hands with teachers upon arrival and departure without needing reminders. Their Qur'an memorization has also improved from having little to no memorization to significantly increasing their retention. Discipline in performing prayers has formed as well: students who previously had never performed *Dhuha* prayers now go directly to the mosque for ablution and prayer without being told, and the same applies to *Dhuhr* prayer though a few students still require occasional reminders.

Sagala explains that behavioral formation through learning is marked by noticeable changes in the individual. In other words, when an individual performs an action resulting from a learning process, it indicates that behavioral development has occurred. This behavioral change is influenced by responses given by individuals in the surrounding environment.¹⁷

This gradual behavioral transformation aligns with what K.H. Ahmad Dahlan taught: Muhammadiyah has played many roles in Indonesia, and those changes have occurred progressively. One of the main goals of Islamic education is to foster *akhlaqul karimah* (noble

¹⁷ Maftuhah, *Revolutionizing Islamic Religious Education : Transforming Paradigms from Al-Azhar in Anticipation of the Future*, 9, no. 1 (2024).

character) through the integration of core Islamic values with local wisdom that does not contradict *shariah*. These moral values become a recognized part of students' personalities. Thus, the concept of character education must promote religious awareness until it becomes a habitual part of the student's behavior.

To foster such Islamic awareness and religious sensitivity, careful planning and appropriate strategies are needed. This concept is embedded in Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah Education, also known as AIK education.¹⁸

The Method of *Mau'izhah* and Advice (Providing Motivation to Promote Goodness)

The word *mau'izhah* originates from the Arabic root *wa'azha*, which means to provide moral instruction or commendable character guidance, as well as to motivate the practice of such virtues and to warn against blameworthy behaviors. It aims to foster goodness through messages that soften the heart. Meanwhile, the word *nasihah* (advice) is derived from the Arabic root letters *nun-sad-ha*, which convey two meanings: purity or sincerity, and connection or restoration. It is said, "*nashaha ash-shay*" meaning that a thing is genuine or pure implying that to advise someone is essentially to purify them from falsehood. Therefore, *nasihah* involves instructing, warning, or encouraging others, accompanied by motivation and caution. The method of advice is essential in touching the emotions of learners.

According to Saputra, *mau'izhah* comes from the Arabic form *wa'adza-ya'idzu-wa'dhan*, which means advice, guidance, education, and warning. The term *mau'izhah hasanah* can be understood as a message containing elements of guidance, education, teaching, stories, glad tidings, warnings, and positive messages (*wasiat*) that can serve as a life guide for attaining salvation in this world and the hereafter.

Mau'izhah hasanah is often translated as "good or kind advice." According to Khasanah, giving advice should be done in a gentle manner using kind words that guide others toward good, with the intention of touching the heart so that the message is accepted, pleasing to hear, emotionally resonant, and intellectually sound.

The language used in *mau'izhah hasanah* is intended to make *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) more approachable, not alienating; easier, not burdensome; loving, not frightening. According to Aziz, characteristics of *mau'izhah hasanah* include advice that seeks Allah's pleasure, teaching that softens the heart and leaves a lasting impression, exemplary conduct and noble character for others to emulate, and the ability to inspire interest and desire toward Islam.

¹⁸ Nurul Humaidi Maftuhah, Romelah, *Analysis of Muhammadiyah Leadership in the Pre-Independence Period*, 9, no. 1 (2024).

Learning motivation is a factor that drives individuals to actively engage in the learning process and strive to achieve academic or personal goals. This motivation is essential because, as noted by Robiatul and Takhfadz, it influences how much effort students put into understanding material, overcoming challenges, and sustaining their interest in learning. There are two main types of learning motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. High learning motivation, according to Yusuf and Romelah, leads to more effective learning in which students not only gain knowledge but also develop skills, positive attitudes, and strong character.

At SD Muhammadiyah 4 in Malang City, *mau'izhah hasanah* is delivered to students daily. During lessons, particularly in Muhammadiyah and Islamic education subjects, teachers regularly incorporate *mau'izhah hasanah* to enhance students' positive behavior.

During extracurricular activities, *mau'izhah hasanah* is given to motivate students to become honest individuals, have open hearts, work hard, and maximize their personal potential. In daily interactions with teachers and peers, *mau'izhah hasanah* is also frequently used to promote tolerance, respectful communication, and appropriate social conduct.

According to Yusuf and Romelah, the cultivation of Islamic character is a key focus in the implementation of Muhammadiyah education. A holistic approach is required to build individuals with an Islamic personality. Values such as honesty, responsibility, diligence, tolerance, and social concern are taught through contextual approaches that are relevant to students' daily lives.

The Qashash (Storytelling) Method

Etymologically, the word *qashash* is the plural form of *qissah*, which derives from the verb *qassa-yaqussu*, meaning "to narrate" or "to trace/follow footsteps." The storytelling method refers to an approach in delivering learning material by narrating events chronologically, whether based on real occurrences or fictional accounts.

The content in the Qur'an that pertains to stories or history is referred to as *Qashashul Qur'an*, which comprises narratives in the Qur'an. These stories recount the events and circumstances of past nations, earlier prophets, and historical incidents. According to Al-Qattan, the Qur'an contains extensive information about earlier communities, the histories of nations, the conditions of various lands, the legacies of past civilizations, and significant events, including those from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These stories are presented in a compelling and captivating manner.

The storytelling method is highly recommended for character education. Through stories, students are expected to internalize noble character traits and exemplary behavior demonstrated by the figures within those stories. Allah SWT often uses storytelling in the Qur'an to teach humans sharing positive stories to be emulated and negative ones to be avoided. The Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) also frequently used stories to educate his followers. Thus, the *Qashash* method encourages students to emulate the virtuous characters portrayed in these stories.

This method of storytelling aligns with what Bandura describes as *symbolic learning models*. As a leading figure in social learning theory, Bandura identifies three main types of observational learning models, one of which is the symbolic model. This involves learning through media such as books, films, television, or digital platforms, where behaviors are demonstrated. The selection of models must be intentional, choosing only those considered beneficial. Children often identify with various models these may be real people in their lives such as parents or older siblings, or fictional characters and media figures.

Symbolic learning is also practiced at SD Muhammadiyah 4 in Malang City. Several subjects incorporate stories of the Prophets, their companions, martyrs, and other Islamic heroes. Periodically, the school shows films on *sīrah nabawīyyah* (the life of the Prophet) in classrooms and even takes students to the cinema to watch character-building films. The school library also offers books featuring inspiring figures that help build students' religious character.

According to Sari, in the context of *Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah* (AIK) subjects within the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) program, significant effort is needed to holistically shape students' character. The Hadith and the Qur'an are essential sources in developing Islamic character. To nurture a strong Islamic identity in learners, exemplary figures are necessary individuals who inspire motivation and guide ideal behavior. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the perfect model, both in practice and principle. Such ideal figures should be incorporated into local cultural contexts so they can function effectively within a curriculum based on Islamic values.

The *Amtsāl* (Parables/Analogies) Method

The use of analogies is one of the teaching methods frequently found in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This method is commonly applied to develop noble character traits among students. The *amtsāl* method is widely used in the Prophet's sayings and teachings.

The *amtsāl* (parable) method enhances deep understanding of complex ideas that may be difficult for students to grasp and stimulates emotional engagement. *Amtsāl al-Qur'an*, as one of the Qur'an's methods of delivering divine messages, teaches students to think logically through the use of analogy (*qiyas*). Shihab explains that Allah SWT uses various parables in the Qur'an to stimulate human thought. These analogies carry profound meanings that require deep contemplation to be fully understood.

According to Mukhtarom, the *amtsal* method indirectly engages both the cognitive and affective domains of students. Mufron adds that the *amtsal* method involves the teacher explaining lesson material using illustrative comparisons. Parables serve to describe abstract concepts by likening them to more concrete realities, making them easier to understand and apply.

The use of *amtsal* improves students' cognitive skills by helping them better understand lesson objectives. This method uses analogies to link difficult material with familiar examples, connects seemingly unrelated concepts, transforms abstract ideas into concrete ones, and employs beautiful and engaging language to motivate students.

At SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang, the *amtsal* method is implemented across various subjects. For example, in general education subjects, teachers provide real-life examples from students' daily experiences and relate them to Islamic teachings. According to Handayani & Achadi, this integration aims to create a holistic educational environment, where students not only acquire academic knowledge but are also trained to apply progressive Islamic values in accordance with Muhammadiyah principles.

He Method of Reward (*Tsawāb*) and Punishment (*'Iqāb*)

The reward method is referred to as *tsawāb* in Arabic, meaning “reward, compensation, or recompense.” This term appears frequently in the Qur'an, especially when discussing the positive outcomes or rewards one may receive, either in this world or in the hereafter. *Tsawāb* represents the recognition or appreciation received by an individual for their positive actions, attitudes, or behaviors, whether in the form of material or non-material rewards.

The method of reward and punishment is considered an effective strategy to enhance students' awareness and mindfulness, encouraging them to stay on the right path. However, implementing this method requires the use of appropriate techniques and approaches. Improper application may result in these methods becoming ineffective or even counterproductive. This aligns with the opinion of Martin et al., who argue that behavior shaping involves providing reinforcers at each stage of behavior development, gradually guiding the individual toward the desired target behavior.

According to Ernawati and Sumarwoto, the technique of providing reinforcement methodically and consistently demonstrated through the shaping method is a development of operant conditioning in behaviorist theory. It involves successive reinforcement, meaning that reinforcement can be provided not only through verbal praise but also via rewards or through the elimination of undesirable behaviors. This type of reinforcement focuses on reducing or eliminating deviant behavior while encouraging the adoption of more effective actions.

Reinforcement is often defined as a stimulus used in training to strengthen the emergence of certain behaviors. In line with this, Marthin states that reinforcement should be applied at every stage of behavioral development to help achieve the desired behavioral outcomes. Boere also supports this by asserting that reinforcement, when used in shaping techniques, can lead to long-term behavioral improvements.

Scheduled reinforcement in shaping techniques is crucial for guiding adolescents toward preferred behaviors. This is because reinforcement encourages the recurrence of similar responses in similar situations, focusing specifically on observable behaviors in the individual.

The Method of Reward (*Tsawāb*) and Punishment (*'Iqāb*)

The method of reward is referred to as *tsawāb* in Arabic, which means "reward, compensation, or recompense." This term is frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, particularly in the context of the positive rewards that individuals may receive in this world or the hereafter. *Tsawāb* signifies recognition given to a person for their positive actions, attitudes, or behaviors whether the reward is material or non-material in nature.

According to Ernawati and Sumarwoto, the technique of reinforcement delivered methodically and explicitly in shaping behavior is a development of operant conditioning within behaviorist theory. It involves successive reinforcement, meaning that the desired behavior is encouraged not only through praise but also by giving rewards or by eliminating undesirable behavior. This kind of reinforcement focuses on reducing or eliminating deviant behavior and promoting more effective, constructive conduct.

At SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang, the methods of reward and punishment are also implemented. Rewards (*tsawāb* or reinforcement) may include trophies, stationery gifts, public announcements of winners, or verbal praise. Praise is given in moderation to maintain its effectiveness. Punishment (*'iqāb*) is applied in the form of verbal and non-verbal warnings. A point-based violation system is also used as part of the punishment approach. When a student's accumulated violation points reach a certain threshold, their parents are called in for a meeting. The most severe form of punishment is when the school returns the student to their parents, indicating that the institution is no longer able to continue their education.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Religious character education at SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang is carefully designed and systematically implemented through strategies that emulate the educational methods of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The approach involves a range of complementary

¹⁹ Karsten SaThierbach et al., "No 主観的健康感を中心とした在宅高齢者における健康関連指標に関する共分散構造分析Title," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2015).

character-building methods, forming a comprehensive and integrated educational system grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values.

First, the *al-uswah al-hasanah* (exemplary role model) method serves as the foundational strategy, where teachers and educators act as role models in instilling values such as honesty, discipline, and compassion through observable and imitable attitudes and behaviors. Second, the *ta'widiyyah* (habituation) method is applied consistently in daily school routines to cultivate positive behavior using a behavioral shaping approach, gradually transforming negative habits into religious and commendable conduct.

Third, the *mau'izhah* (good advice) method is used to awaken students' inner awareness through verbal motivation, regularly delivered in both instructional contexts and social interactions within the school environment. This strengthens the students' enthusiasm and commitment to behaving in accordance with Islamic teachings. Fourth, the *qashash* (storytelling) method is utilized as an effective symbolic learning medium to instill noble values through inspiring stories from the Qur'an, Hadith, and notable Islamic figures. This method facilitates students' understanding of values through emotional and cognitive engagement.

Fifth, the *amtsal* (parable) method is employed to explain abstract concepts using concrete analogies drawn from students' everyday experiences, thereby enhancing their comprehension and grasp of Islamic values. Sixth, the *tsawāb* and *'iqāb* (reward and punishment) method is implemented as a form of measured and educational reinforcement and discipline. Positive rewards such as praise and recognition are used to reinforce good behavior, while corrective, educational punishments are applied proportionally to address misconduct.

Together, these strategies demonstrate that SD Muhammadiyah 4 Malang has successfully built a religious character education ecosystem rooted in Islamic values. The school effectively balances affective, cognitive, and psychomotor approaches in shaping student character. Through the application of these methods, the school not only produces intellectually capable students but also nurtures individuals who excel in moral integrity and spiritual depth.

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