



THE ROLE OF QUR'ANIC EDUCATION CENTRE TEACHERS IN INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND CHILDREN'S CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the importance of character education from an early age, particularly within non-formal educational institutions such as Qur'anic Education Centers (TPQ). TPQs play a strategic role in shaping children's morals and character through religious value-based learning activities. The purpose of this research is to explore the role of TPQ teachers in shaping children's character, examine the effectiveness of character-oriented learning activities, and analyse how the integration of educational technology supports the process. This research used a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach as proposed by John W. Creswell. The research subjects were the teachers at TPQ An-Nur Kajen. Data were collected through interviews and observation, and analysed using phenomenological steps including meaning-making, theme identification, and essence description. The findings reveal that TPQ teachers act as mentors, character builders, and collaborators with parents. Religious activities, group discussions, and educational games serve as effective tools in shaping children's character. Moreover, the integration of educational technology such as visual media, Qur'an learning apps, and interactive digital games contributes significantly to enhancing children's motivation and engagement. The study concludes that character education in TPQ will be more effective when implemented collaboratively and supported by relevant educational technology.

Keywords: TPQ teachers, character education, early childhood, educational technology

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of a child's personality is highly dependent on character education as a fundamental element. The main goal is to form a generation that not only excels in intellectual abilities, but also behaves nobly (Fitriyani et al., 2022), has high social awareness, and is able to act in accordance with the moral norms upheld in society (Islamiah & Rifan, 2022). In the context of Islamic society, character education is closely related to religious values (Cinantya et al., 2019) which form the basis of behaviour and decision making in life. The cultivation of these values is not only limited to formal educational institutions, but also through non-formal education, one of which is the Al-Qur'an Education Centers (TPQ)(Anwar, 2021)

As a religious educational institution that focuses on teaching the Qur'an to children, TPQ has an important role in fostering moral and spiritual values that shape children's character(Retnasari et al., 2019). In the TPQ environment, the teacher is not only tasked with conveying memorisation or recitation of the Qur'an, but also being a role model in instilling the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility(Umardiyah et al., 2022), and politeness. TPQ teachers directly interact with children in religious learning activities that are full of character education values (Retnasari et al., 2019).

Along with the times, the challenges in educating children are increasingly complex. Children now live in a digital era filled with various information (Barokah, 2023) and external influences that can have both positive and negative impacts on their character formation. Therefore, TPQ teachers are required to continue to innovate, not only in learning approaches, but also in utilising educational technology (Nur Hasanah & Kristiyah, 2023) as supporting media (Barokah, 2023). The utilisation of digital media such as Islamic values learning videos, interactive learning applications (Prasetyo et al., 2023), to Islamic character-based online platforms can be an attractive alternative strategy for children to understand character values in a more contextual and fun way (Rahmi et al., 2023). The success of the BTQ programme is greatly influenced by institutional leadership, the competence of instructors, and the support of a conducive learning environment, so that the quality of religious activities depends not only on the curriculum, but also on the management system (Suhendar et al., 2022).

However, until now there have not been many studies that specifically examine the role of TPQ teachers in integrating technology and the implementation of children's character education, especially at the local level such as TPQ An-Nur Pekalongan. In addition, there are also limited studies that explore how educational technology can be used appropriately in the character learning process in the TPQ environment.

The urgency of this research is based on the need to understand how TPQ teachers adapt and innovate to face the challenges of modern education (Asshidiqi et al., 2023). This study aims to examine the strategies, roles and practices of TPQ teachers in implementing character education. In addition, it also explores the potential integration of educational technology in the learning process at TPQ.

This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution in enriching the study of character education based on Islamic values in non-formal institutions, as well as providing practical benefits for TPQ teachers and managers of religious institutions in designing character learning strategies that are more innovative, contextual, and relevant to the times.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe the role of TPQ teachers in children's character education. Data were collected through interviews with TPQ teachers who have experience in teaching character education, as well as direct observation of learning activities at TPQ. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information about the application of character education in

the context of teaching at TPQ. Data analysis was conducted using phenomenological analysis according to John W. Creswell(Hadi et al., 2021), which aims to understand the meaning of life experiences experienced by TPQ teachers in teaching character education. In this analysis, the researcher identified the main themes that emerged from interviews and observations to explore an in-depth understanding of the role of TPQ teachers.

The data sources in this study are TPQ teachers involved in children's character education. The research data sources were selected based on the criteria of experience in teaching character education at TPQ. In addition, observation data was collected during learning activities at TPQ to capture the direct dynamics that occur in the classroom. Through interviews and observations, this study aims to provide a clearer picture of the role of teachers in educating children's character in the TPQ environment, by analysing their experiences through an in-depth phenomenological approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Role of TPQ Teachers in Shaping Children's Character at TPQ An-Nur Kajen

TPQ teachers at TPQ An-Nur in Wonorejo Kajen Village play a very important role in shaping children's character. As character builders, TPQ teachers provide examples, role models, and motivation to encourage children to behave well. TPQ teachers have integrated educational technology such as character-based learning applications(Wulandari et al., 2022) and learning videos to convey positive insights and moral values(Wisada et al., 2019). Through the use of these media, TPQ teachers enrich children's learning experiences and support more holistic character learning(Nita et al., 2024). In this activity, TPQ teachers not only provide guidance in person, but also through online platforms, so that children can learn from examples and role models in social and moral contexts(Nur Hasanah & Kristiyah, 2023)

TPQ An-Nur Kajen teachers assist children to develop their character through positive direction. TPQ teachers have provided direct assistance in teaching and learning activities, as well as using educational technology such as whatApp to provide guidance to children outside formal learning hours. Through this communication, TPQ teachers become friends to confide in, provide solutions to problems faced by children, and help them develop positive values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility(Nusaibah & Bustam, 2023)

TPQ An-Nur Kajen teachers work together with parents and other related parties to develop children's character. TPQ teachers have utilised communication technology, such as WhatsApp groups to establish better coordination with parents. Through this means, teachers and parents share information related to children's development and design steps together in educating children. This collaboration strengthens the implementation of character education taught at TPQ in children's daily lives(Aziz et al., 2023)

Based on the results of interviews with TPQ teachers at TPQ An-Nur Kajen, it is concluded that teachers at the TPQ have played an active role in shaping children's

character. TPQ teachers have implemented various activities that support children's character development, such as religious activities, discussions, educational games, and the use of interactive learning technology. These activities have shown positive impacts, with children attending TPQ showing improvements in honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring and politeness.

However, some aspects still need to be improved to optimise the role of TPQ teachers in shaping children's character. One of them is a stronger synergy between TPQ teachers, parents, and other related parties(Aziz et al., 2023). This synergy is important so that the character values taught at TPQ are consistently applied in children's daily lives. Efforts made to improve the role of TPQ teachers in children's character building include: improving the knowledge and skills of TPQ teachers in implementing character education, strengthening communication and cooperation between teachers and parents using technology, and providing facilities and infrastructure that support character education activities, such as technological devices that facilitate distance learning and strengthening character values in children's daily lives (Ahmad S & Hodsay, 2020).

B. Effectiveness of Character Education-Oriented Learning Activities at TPQ An-Nur Kajen

Character education is an important process in shaping children's noble character, with the aim of instilling values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring, and politeness(Retnasari et al., 2019). TPQ An-Nur Kajen as a non-formal education institution has a strong commitment to strengthening these values through various learning activities that are carried out in a structured and meaningful manner. In practice, TPQ teachers consistently integrate character education in every activity, whether religious activities, discussions or games. Religious activities such as recitation, congregational prayers, and recitation of the Qur'an have become the main means of instilling the values of honesty and responsibility, as well as building children's discipline in carrying out religious obligations.

Discussion activities carried out in this TPQ have also proven effective in shaping attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and cooperation among students. Children are trained to listen and respect each other's opinions, understand other people's points of view, and solve problems together. Meanwhile, educationally designed game activities provide space for children to express their enthusiasm, excitement and self-confidence, while fostering the value of sportsmanship and cheerfulness in a fun learning atmosphere.

Based on interviews with TPQ teachers at TPQ An-Nur Kajen, character education-orientated learning activities have shown significant effectiveness. Children have experienced real behavioural changes, such as increased honesty and discipline, reduced cheating or rule-breaking behaviour, and increased care and tolerance for others. The use of contextual learning methods supported by simple technology, such as playing inspirational videos, using audio visuals in reciting the Qur'an, and online

coordination with parents, also strengthens the impact of these activities(Haerudin & Noor, 2022)

However, the effectiveness of this activity can still be improved through strengthening the synergy between TPQ teachers, parents, and other related parties. This synergy is key in ensuring that the character values taught in TPQ are not only conceptually understood, but also practised in children's daily lives. Continuous collaboration and maximising the use of communication technology are strategic steps to support the sustainability of character education in the TPQ environment(Widianti, 2023)

C. Character Education-Oriented Learning Activities at TPQ An-Nur Kajen

In religious activities at TPQ An-Nur Kajen, children are taught spiritual and moral values that serve as guidelines in daily life. These activities are held every day and include recitation, congregational prayers, and recitation of the Qur'an. In recitation, TPQ teachers guide children to understand basic religious materials such as aqidah, worship, and morals through illustrated stories, Islamic video screenings, and simple presentation media displayed through LCD projectors. Children are also introduced to character values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility and social care. Congregational prayer activities train discipline and togetherness, while recitation of the Qur'an with the help of digital audio applications or interactive guides encourages children to learn diligently, love the Qur'an, and diligently practice independently at home.

Routine discussion activities conducted every week after recitation are an important platform in developing children's critical thinking skills and empathy. TPQ teachers facilitate discussions by utilising pictures, short videos, or interactive whiteboards to spark children's ideas (Islamiah & Rifan, 2022). Discussion themes include tolerance, understanding other people's feelings, and the importance of cooperation. Through these activities, children are trained to listen, express opinions, and learn to respect other people's points of view constructively(Fitriyani et al., 2022)

Meanwhile, game activities carried out every day after teaching and learning are an important means of developing children's affective aspects(Naufal & Maksum, 2024). The games provided are not only traditional games, but also technology-based educational games such as interactive quizzes(Rtnasari et al., 2019) or application-based games (Marble Studio) that support religious material. Children look more confident, cheerful, and enthusiastic about participating in activities, which shows that character learning is not only effective through formal approaches, but also through creative and fun game media that utilise simple technology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted at TPQ An-Nur Kajen, it can be concluded that the role of TPQ teachers in children's character building is very significant, both as mentors, character builders, and collaborators with parents. Character education-oriented learning activities including religious activities, discussions, and games have

proven effective in instilling values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social care to children. In addition, the integration of educational technology in learning activities, such as the utilisation of audiovisual media, Qur'an learning applications and interactive quizzes, strengthens children's engagement and helps teachers to convey character values in a more interesting and contextual manner. Therefore, character education in TPQ does not only depend on conventional approaches, but also requires technological support and cross-party synergy so that these values can be embedded and reflected in children's behaviour in a sustainable manner.

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