# The Love of the Qur'an Culture Program in Forming the Islamic Character of Elementary School Students

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| Article Info | ABSTRACT |
|---|---|
| | Religious character formation in elementary school pupils commonly suffers moral degeneration in the digital age; therefore, habituation in schools is needed to strengthen religious ideals. Elementary School 266 Pakkanna started a specific program to address this issue; however, its efficacy and implementation challenges need further study. This study examines the Culture of Love for the Qur'an program, its impact on students' Islamic character, and supporting and limiting elements. This study is descriptive and qualitative. Field observations and in-depth interviews with Elementary School 266 Pakkanna's principal and teachers collected data. To verify the findings, qualitative descriptions and data triangulation were used. The study found that 1) joint tadarus activities before class, tahsin classes for grades 1–3, and a tahfidz program using memorization cards for grades 4–6 are used to implement the program; 2) this program helps students become faithful and pious by internalizing Qur'an values; and 3) student motivation and teacher-parent collaboration are key. This study helps educators incorporate Al-Qur'anic ideals into school culture and strengthens elementary school religion-based character education management research.<br><br> |

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Character education plays a crucial role in the national education system, especially at the elementary school level, a crucial stage in shaping children's personalities (Hanafiah et al., 2024; Saryanto et al., 2023). In the contemporary era marked by digital disruption and information globalization, the moral challenges facing students are increasingly complex (Rahimi & Oh, 2024). The unfiltered flow of information through social media has the potential to erode students' ethical values, manners, and spirituality (Ekwunife et al., 2025). The moral crisis manifested in bullying, lack of respect for educators, and even hedonistic lifestyles signals the urgency of strengthening character based on transcendental values (Putri et al., 2025).

In the context of Muslim society in Indonesia, character formation cannot be separated from Islamic values (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Ismail, 2016). Islamic character (al-akhlak al-karimah) is not merely a matter of decorative behavior but rather a representation of the depth of one's faith (Baihaqi et al., 2024). However, the reality on the ground shows that Islamic religious education in schools is often confined to the cognitive realm—limited to the transfer of knowledge without the instillation of profound values (Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Sahin, 2018). As a result, students understand Islamic law theoretically but are unable to apply it in their daily lives. Therefore, the Quran serves as a Manhaj for character education (Wanto & Jalwis, 2021; Zaitun et al., 2023).

The Quran is not only a holy book for Muslims but also a source of guidance and mercy containing universal pedagogical principles (Stimpson & Calvert, 2021). Fostering a culture of love for the Quran from an early age is a strategic step to protect students' mentality from negative environmental influences (Ahnan'Azzam & Leany, 2024; Capritilova, 2021). Love for the Quran should not stop at the ability to read (tilawah) but must lead to understanding (tadabbur) and practice (itba').

Quran-based school culture programs, such as those initiated at elementary schools 266 Pakkanna, are relevant. School culture exerts a subtle influence on the collective habits of students. When students regularly engage with the Quran—through activities like tadarus, tahsin, and tahfidz—they are expected to absorb its values deeply, which will help them develop a strong Islamic character.

Despite the widespread implementation of religious programs in various schools, their execution frequently encounters structural and cultural barriers (Chotimah et al., 2025; Zubaida, 2024). At elementary schools 266 Pakkanna, an intriguing dynamic exists where the "Quran Love Culture" program is designed to reach all grade levels, with differentiated targets ranging from improving recitation (tahsin) to memorizing (tahfidz). However, challenges arise from managerial aspects, such as limited curricular time allocated due to the burden of general subjects and limited supporting facilities, such as insufficient copies of the Juz Amma Mushaf for all students. Furthermore, synergy between the school environment and the family environment remains a significant challenge. Character developed at school often "fades" when students return home due to lack of supervision or the absence of religious role models from parents. Therefore, it is important to examine how elementary schools 266 Pakkanna manages collaboration between stakeholders to maintain the program's consistency.

Previous research on Qur'an-based character education has generally focused on formal religious institutions such as Islamic Elementary Schools or Islamic Boarding Schools (Alhamuddin et al., 2025; Khotimah & Santono, 2025; Maharani & Anwari, 2025). Research in public elementary schools usually looks at how well Islamic Religious Education classes work, instead of focusing on building a specific "culture" or environment that encourages a love for the Quran as a keyway to develop character.

Many studies emphasize academic success or Quranic literacy skills alone (Aziz & Arsyad, 2024; Hanafi & Pohan, 2024; Hayi et al., 2025). A research gap exists regarding how the transition from "reading activities" to "character development" occurs in

elementary school-aged children in a heterogeneous public-school environment. This study aims to fill this gap by holistically evaluating the planning, implementation, and role of teachers, as well as the tangible impact on student behavior. This study highlights a segmented model of Quranic literacy focus (Grades 1-3 on reading quality/tahsin and Grades 4-6 on memorization quantity/tahfidz). This approach offers a new model for managing character education in elementary schools to ensure that the target load aligns with children's cognitive development. Furthermore, this study reveals how collaboration between teachers, principals, and parents is a key driver in overcoming facility barriers (such as a lack of Juz Amma) and time constraints. This work provides a new perspective that the success of Islamic character education does not depend on luxurious facilities, but rather on the strength of collective commitment.

The significance of this research lies in its empirical demonstration that Islamic character formation is not a quick fix or solely reliant on lectures. A consistent and sustainable "culture" is required. This study aims to contribute to the development of an applicable character education model that combines spirituality with school management discipline.

The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other public schools in Indonesia in developing programs to strengthen the profile of students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess moral integrity rooted in the Qur'an. Through an evaluation of supporting and inhibiting factors, this article offers practical solutions for education policymakers to provide more space for character-based programs in elementary schools.

## 2.  METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. The choice of qualitative methods is based on the research objective of seeking a deep and comprehensive understanding of the social phenomenon of how the Love of the Qur'an Culture Program is implemented to shape student character. Descriptive research aims to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the population or research object accurately and factually regarding the role of the school environment in the internalization of religious values. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the key instrument (human instrument). The researcher is directly involved in the field at elementary school 266 Pakkanna to conduct observations, interviews, and document collection. The researcher's presence at the research site serves to capture the meaning behind student and teacher behavior and to understand the school's cultural context without any intervention that alters the subjects' natural state.

This research was conducted at elementary school 266 Pakkanna. The research subjects (informants) were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting informants based on specific considerations who are considered most knowledgeable about the research problem. The key information in this study includes: (1) the principal, as the manager and person responsible for program policy. (2)

Classroom Teachers and Religion Teachers, as the program's technical implementers in the field who interact directly with students.

To obtain valid data, the researcher used a triangulation method, which included:

1. Passive Participant Observation: The researcher directly observed morning tadarus activities, the tahsin learning process in lower grades (1-3), and memorization exams (tahfidz) in upper grades (4-6).
2. In-depth Interviews: Conducted semi-structured with the principal and teachers to explore their perspectives on the program's role in student attitudes and behavior.
3. Documentation: Collected written and visual data related to infrastructure (such as the availability of Juz Amma) and program administration.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously until completion. The analysis process included: (1) Data Reduction: Summarizing, selecting key points, and focusing on important aspects related to Islamic character formation. (2) Data Display: Presenting data in narrative and systematic prose descriptions for easy understanding. (3) Conclusion Drawing/Verification: Seeking the meaning of each data collected and making associations between data to obtain clear facts regarding the effectiveness of the program and its inhibiting factors. In addition, to ensure the validity of the data, researchers conducted Source Triangulation and Technical Triangulation. Researchers compared information obtained from teachers with information from the principal and verified the results of interviews with the results of real observations in the field regarding student behavior at school.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Research results at elementary school 266 Pakkanna indicate that the "Quran Love Culture" program is not simply an additional activity but has become an identity and routine integrated into the school system. The following are the details of the research findings in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 1 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 28 | 93,33 |
| 2 | Honesty | 27 | 90 |
| 3 | Discipline | 29 | 96,67 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 29 | 96,67 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 25 | 83,33 |
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 26 | 86,67 |
| | Average | 27,33 | 91,11 |

**Table 2.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 2 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 26 | 92,86 |
| 2 | Honesty | 25 | 89,29 |
| 3 | Discipline | 27 | 96,43 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 24 | 85,71 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 26 | 92,86 |
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 24 | 85,71 |
| | Average | 25,33 | 90,46 |

**Table 3.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 3 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 27 | 90 |
| 2 | Honesty | 29 | 96,67 |
| 3 | Discipline | 30 | 100 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 26 | 86,67 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 27 | 90 |
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 29 | 96,67 |
| | Average | 28 | 93,33 |

**Table 4.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 4 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 29 | 96,67 |
| 2 | Honesty | 28 | 93,33 |
| 3 | Discipline | 30 | 100 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 30 | 100 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 28 | 93,33 |
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 29 | 96,67 |
| | Average | 29 | 96,67 |

**Table 5.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 5 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 24 | 100 |
| 2 | Honesty | 23 | 95,83 |
| 3 | Discipline | 24 | 100 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 22 | 91,67 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 20 | 83,33 |

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 23 | 95,83 |
| | **Average** | **22,67** | **92,79** |

**Table 6.** Results of Observations on the Islamic Character of Grade 6 Students

| No | Indicators | It appears (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Religious Attitude | 18 | 100 |
| 2 | Honesty | 18 | 100 |
| 3 | Discipline | 17 | 94,44 |
| 4 | Responsibility | 17 | 94,44 |
| 5 | Social Concern | 16 | 88,89 |
| 6 | Environmental Concern | 17 | 94,44 |
| | **Average** | **17,17** | **95,39** |

**Implementation of the Quran Love Culture Program**

This program is structured by grade level to ensure that the target load aligns with students' cognitive development. The program begins each morning before the first period begins.

a. Joint Tadarus: Conducted as a class in each class as a form of habituation.
b. Tahsin Class (Grades 1–3): Focuses on improving memorization and fluency in reading the Quran.
c. Tahfidz Class (Grades 4–6): Focuses on memorizing short surahs (Juz 30) with a monitoring system using Memorization Cards.

Interview Results (Class Teacher):
*"We divide the assignments, so students don't feel overwhelmed. For lower grades, the important thing is that they first fall in love with the Quran and learn to recite it correctly (Tahsin). Once they reach 4th grade and above, we push memorization. Each student has a monitoring card, so parents can also monitor their progress at home."*

**The Program's Role in Shaping Islamic Character**

Based on observations, this program plays a significant role in transforming student behavior. The character traits developed include discipline, inner peace, and improved good manners. The Quran serves as a moral standard for students in their interactions.

Interview Results (Principal):
*"The most striking change is the calmer and more religious atmosphere at school. This program isn't just about memorizing the Quran, but also about how the Quran influences their behavior. We see students becoming more respectful of their teachers*

*and more disciplined with their time. We want to cultivate a generation with a strong foundation of faith before they graduate."*

Interview Results (Religious Teacher):
*"Character cannot be taught through theory alone. Through this culture of loving the Quran, children are accustomed to starting the day with something sacred. This impacts their emotions; they become less prone to quarreling and more caring towards their peers."*

## Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The research identified several key elements influencing the program's sustainability at elementary school 266 Pakkanna:

### a. Supporting Factors

- Student Enthusiasm: Students' internal desire to develop good character.
- Teacher and Parent Synergy: Solid collaboration in monitoring student memorization through control cards.
- School Facilities: Availability of space and support for school policies that prioritize religious activities.

### b. Inhibiting Factors

- Time Allocation: Limited activity duration often prevents optimal interaction between teachers and students in listening to memorization (recitation).
- Media Availability: The limited number of Juz Amma copies available at school means some students must take turns or bring their own from home.

Interview Results (Teacher):
*"Our main challenges are time and the availability of Juz Amma books. Sometimes, when the children are excited about memorizing the book, the bell has already rung. We also hope for assistance or the provision of additional Juz Amma books so that each child can have their own copy at school."*

The data above shows a positive correlation between the intensity of students' interaction with the Quran and their character development. The use of instruments such as memorization cards has proven effective as a communication bridge between schools and parents, which is key to successful character education at the elementary level.

## Discussion

### School Culture Dynamics in Character Internalization

Research findings at elementary school 266 Pakkanna indicate that Islamic character formation does not occur instantly, but rather through the creation of a consistent school ecosystem or culture. The "Quran Love Culture" program is a concrete example of this habituation strategy. In theory, character is a "psychological muscle" that can only grow through practice. When students recite the Quran every morning, they not only practice

reading but also cultivate the discipline and emotional composure that are the foundation of Islamic character.

The program differentiation (Tahsin for lower grades and Tahfidz for upper grades) demonstrates a sound pedagogical understanding of children's cognitive development. This aligns with moral development theory, which states that elementary school-aged children require concrete and gradual instruction (Djuaini, 2025; Wismaliya et al., 2018). By focusing on reading quality (tahsin) early on, the school is building a love and emotional connection to the Quran, which is then translated into responsibility through memorization targets (tahfidz) in higher grades.

### The Role of the Quran as a Behavioral Transformer

Interview results revealed that this program impacted students' manners and emotional control. From an Islamic educational perspective, the Quran functions as Al-Mawa'izah (a source of warning/advice). Daily interaction with holy verses provides spiritual nourishment that suppresses negative behavioral tendencies.

The success of elementary school 266 Pakkanna in changing student behavior demonstrates that the Quran is not merely a subject matter but rather a religious psychotherapeutic instrument capable of softening students' hearts. Values such as respect for teachers and caring for others emerged because the students absorbed Quranic principles into their subconscious through the sounds of the recitations they heard and recited daily.

### Effectiveness of Monitoring Instruments and Synergy of the Three Education Centers

One key finding was the use of memorization cards as a control tool. From a managerial perspective, these cards serve as a medium for transparency and accountability. The success of character formation depends heavily on the synergy between the school and the family (parents). The memorization cards serve as a bridge that fosters communication between teachers and parents regarding the child's spiritual development. This reinforces Ki Hajar Dewantara's Tri Pusat Pendidikan concept, which states that character education will be effective if the school, family, and community support each other (Alghifari et al., 2023; Saryono et al., 2024; Zulkarnain et al., 2023). Despite obstacles such as a lack of Juz Amma manuscripts and limited time, the collective commitment of dedicated teachers and cooperative parents has proven to be sufficient to offset the lack of physical facilities.

### Overcoming Obstacles: Strategic Solutions

The obstacles identified in this study, such as limited time and resources (Juz Amma), are a common problem in many public elementary schools. However, elementary school 266 Pakkanna's innovative use of time before lessons demonstrates managerial efficiency.

To address the Juz Amma shortage, schools can implement digitalization strategies (using projectors to display verses) or a Quranic endowment program funded by alumni

or the surrounding community. These findings provide an important contribution, demonstrating that material limitations should not be a barrier to the implementation of character education, provided there is strong political will from school leadership.

This study confirms that "Quranic Love Culture" is a highly relevant and effective method for developing students with Islamic character in public schools. The success of this program is not determined by the luxury of facilities but rather by consistent routines, teacher role models, and control mechanisms involving parents.

## 4.    CONCLUSION

The Love of the Qur'an Culture program is systematically implemented through three main pillars: classical morning recitation, a tahsin program for lower grades (1–3), and a tahfidz program for upper grades (4–6). The use of "Memorization Cards" serves as an effective managerial instrument for monitoring individual student progress. This program has an important impact on the students' Islamic character. Students' discipline, emotional calm, and respect and courtesy toward teachers and peers improve when they internalize Qur'anic values through daily practice. The Qur'an is no longer merely a text but a practical guideline for behavior within the school environment. Students' internal motivation, teachers' dedication, and active collaboration with parents support the program's success. Despite obstacles such as limited time allocation and a lack of Juz Amma copies, the collective commitment of school stakeholders has maintained the program's sustainability as a positive school culture.

As a suggestion, it is hoped that schools can develop alternative strategies to overcome the shortage of Mushafs, for example, through the provision of a "Qur'an Waqf" program from parents or alumni. In addition, optimizing the use of digital media (such as audio visuals) can be a solution when the time is limited for face-to-face memorization submissions. Teachers are expected to continue to improve the quality of exemplary behavior (uswatun hasanah), because students' characters are not only formed from what they read in the Qur'an, but also from what they see in their teachers' daily behavior. This research is limited to the scope of one public elementary school. Further researchers are advised to conduct comparative research or classroom action research (action research) to test the effectiveness of certain methods in accelerating mastery of Qur'an memorization in elementary school students.

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