Building Stronger Youth through Faith-Based Organizations: Integrating Organizational Management for Character Development

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the contribution of religious organization activities to the character development of adolescents in Indonesia. The method used was descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through direct observation and documentation of activities. The results indicate that routine activities such as youth religious study groups, Quranic recitation, basic leadership training, and social activities have shaped six key character values: religiosity, discipline, responsibility, independence, leadership, and social awareness. The development process was conducted in a participatory manner, with adolescents not only participating but also implementing and managing the activities. This research provides theoretical contributions to the field of community-based character education, particularly the role of mosques as effective non-formal educational institutions in internalizing moral and spiritual values in adolescents. However, a limitation of this study lies in the lack of use of interviews or group discussions that could explore the affective and reflective aspects of the participants. Future research is recommended to use more diverse methods and expand the scope of the research to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Character is the foundational element in shaping a well-rounded and responsible individual. In the context of Indonesia, character development is an integral part of the national education mission, as outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. This law states that the purpose of education is to develop the potential of students to become faithful individuals, devout to God, virtuous, healthy, capable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens. In the modern era, these values face significant challenges due to the rapid pace

of globalisation, the penetration of foreign cultures through digital media, and the diminishing authority of traditional religious and local cultural values among the younger generation. Globalisation has a negative impact, leading to a decline in the moral values of the nation's future generations. Therefore, character education is the answer to address these issues (Nurlaili & Naufal, 2022).

Character education is a system of instilling character values in students, encompassing knowledge, awareness, ability, and the actions to implement those values. Values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, and religiosity are essential in building a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually mature. The challenges of the digital era, filled with negative influences, make character education even more important so that students can discern accurate information, act wisely, and embody noble morals in their everyday lives. Therefore, character education must be consistently and comprehensively applied across various aspects of life, including educational institutions, religious institutions, and the social environment (Sinambela & Sinaga, 2024).

This issue is particularly evident in the lives of adolescents, a group that is in the phase of identity formation and most vulnerable to environmental influences. Phenomena such as drug abuse, promiscuity, cyberbullying, consumption of harmful content on social media, and a decreasing interest in religious activities are common signs of a character crisis. In such situations, the presence of character education based on religious values becomes a pressing need. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to negative influences that can threaten the development of their character and Islamic values. Therefore, Islamic character education is essential in helping adolescents develop strong emotional, moral, and spiritual intelligence to face these challenges (Afifah & Yogyakarta, 2024). Character education should not just be theoretical in classrooms; it must be practised in everyday life, instilled through various mediums, including social and religious environments such as mosques.

The mosque, in addition to being a place of worship, also serves as a religious social institution with an educational and transformative function in the life of the community. The role of the mosque in character development for the younger generation has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, where the mosque was the centre of education, da'wah, consultation, and the formation of civilisation. In the modern context, mosques can play a strategic role as a place for youth character development through religious activities that not only strengthen spiritual aspects but also social and moral aspects. Activities conducted by youth organisations in the mosque to develop religious character can align with the intended goals. Among them, they are expected to demonstrate religious values, especially virtuous character, and cultivate good

moral behaviour (Sanjaya et al., 2023). Through regular study groups, Islamic studies, youth leadership training, community service, and social programs, young people can be directed to embody religious values, empathy, discipline, responsibility, and care for others. This is further supported by Oktariani (2024), who states that the role of mosque youth groups in developing religious character is supported by regular weekly and monthly studies, as well as social services, making mosque youth organisations highly beneficial in instilling religious character values (Oktariani et al., 2024).

A concrete example of efforts to build youth character through mosque activities can be found at Masjid Al Ikhlas, located in the Serdang Asri 1 Housing Complex, Panongan, Tangerang. This mosque has an active Youth Mosque Organisation that regularly organises various religious activities, including youth study groups, young preacher training, Quran recitation, Islamic discussions, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and social activities such as charity work and neighbourhood cooperation. The Youth Mosque Organisation plays a crucial role in the development of youth, serving as a platform that facilitates personal growth and development among young people, while also contributing to the community (Ilmanun et al., 2024). The Youth Mosque Organisation generally plays multiple roles, performed by young people who care about and are actively involved in their local community (Pratama et al., 2022). In its implementation, the youth are not only participants but are also involved as managers and implementers of activities, providing them with real-life experience in developing leadership, cooperation, independence, and social responsibility.

However, although these religious activities have been ongoing for some time and have received support from mosque administrators and the surrounding community, there remains a lack of academic studies that systematically document and analyse how these activities contribute to youth character development. Therefore, this study aims to examine in-depth how religious activities at Masjid Al-Ikhlas Serdang Asri 1 contribute to the formation of a religious, disciplined, and integrity-driven youth character. This research will also identify the character values instilled through these activities and the factors that support or hinder their implementation.

With this approach, it is hoped that the research results will not only contribute to the academic field, particularly Islamic education and character education, but also provide practical recommendations for mosque administrators, youth mentors, and the broader community in developing effective religious programs as a means of character development for the younger generation in terms of both moral and spiritual excellence.

RESEARCH METHOD

      This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study. The purpose of this study is to describe the process of character development for adolescents through religious activities at the Al Ikhlas Serdang Asri 1 Mosque, Panongan District, Tangerang Regency. This approach is used to understand the phenomenon in depth based on its natural context without intervention. Data collection techniques were conducted through participant observation and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly participating in adolescent religious activities, such as religious study groups, tadarus (religious study), training for young preachers, and other social activities. The researcher recorded the implementation process, interactions between adolescents, and visible forms of character values, such as discipline, cooperation, and responsibility. Meanwhile, documentation was obtained from the archives of adolescent activities at the mosque, including activity schedules, photographs, program reports, and notes from mosque administrators. Data analysis applied the Miles & Huberman (1992) model—including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process was repeated until data saturation was reached. As a form of validation, triangulation of sources and techniques was used to ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings (Islami et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religious Activities of Mosque Youth and Their Contribution to Character Formation

      Observations and documentation at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque in Serdang Asri1 revealed four main activities that consistently occur and have a profound impact on the character of adolescents: weekly religious studies, basic leadership training, and social activities. Adolescent participation has evolved from mere attendance to event organizers to moderators, coordinators, and committee chairs, significantly fostering the values of responsibility, leadership, independence, discipline, empathy, and collaboration.

      Researchers noted that in each activity, adolescents are not merely present as participants but are also involved in the organizational structure, serving as committee chairs, moderators, recorders, and hosts. This situation provides significant opportunities for adolescents to practice communication, leadership, discipline, and responsibility. These activities demonstrate that the mosque has fulfilled its transformative function as an institution for social and moral education. Furthermore, the commemoration of major Islamic holidays such as Isra Mi'raj, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, and the 1st of Muharram

serves as an opportunity to involve adolescents in larger-scale activities. During these activities, adolescents actively develop proposals, organize program schedules, distribute invitations, and even serve as emcees and short resource persons. This reinforces social learning theory, which states that effective character formation occurs through direct experience and social responsibility in collective activities.

Youth Recitation every Sunday evening

Youth Recitation is held every Sunday evening after Isha prayers at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque in Serdang Asri I. Topics discussed include strengthening adolescent morals, community issues, and spiritual preparation to face the challenges of the times. This activity is called "KANTIN (Routine Study)" by the youth association of the Serdang Asri I Mosque. Documentation of the activity, including pamphlets (e-fliers), photos, and reports, demonstrates the involvement of youth not only as listeners but also as leading prayers, presenting in group discussions, and sharing personal reflections at the end of the session. This activity consistently increases religious awareness, self-confidence, and community spirit. This is because character formation requires hard and consistent effort to achieve character education values (Oktriyeni & Sulaiman, 2025).

Basic leadership training

The leadership training program is held every six months with modules covering Islamic leadership, communication skills, event management, and conflict resolution simulations. Unlike theoretical training, this training is structured in a participatory manner, with youth given practical tasks such as developing event proposals, establishing committee structures, and completing case studies on organizational conflict.

Documentation and activity evaluation sheets show that approximately 70% of participants took on concrete roles as coordinators of major events after participating in the training. This reflects a significant increase in initiative, self-confidence, and an understanding of the value of Islamic leadership in the context of religious activities in mosques. Basic leadership training has three main benefits: developing leadership skills and character, practicing problem-solving, and building trust (Januari et al., 2023). This is supported by research by Hasibuan (2023) that found that youth leadership training in mosques significantly impacts morals and religious activities. This activity makes participants more active in leading and motivating their peers (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

Social Activities and Community Service

From documentation (activity photos, logbooks, and management reports), researchers noted that the youth were not only participants but also served as event coordinators, moderators, and technical managers. Regular social activities carried out by the Al-Ikhlas Mosque Youth include charity drives for orphans, community service for natural disaster victims, and community service activities around the mosque. Based on photo documentation, logbooks, and activity reports, all youth were not only present as participants but also played important roles, including field coordinators, fundraisers, package packers, and technical managers. This demonstrates that the values of responsibility, empathy, and cooperation are honed not only through seminar dialogue but also through the actual responsibilities they carry out. This demonstrates that the mosque youth organization provides them with a space to practice responsibility, leadership, and independence, strengthening the hypothesis that active participation through direct experience contributes significantly to character development.

Character Values That Grow from Mosque Activities

Analysis of documentation and activity patterns reveals six core character values that consistently develop:

Religiosity

The series of activities carried out by the youth of the Al Ikhlas Mosque in Serdang Asri 1 demonstrates that religious values are not only taught through lectures but also brought to life through direct experience. In the regular weekly religious study group known as "KANTIN," the youth not only receive Islamic material but also actively lead prayers, share reflections, and even serve as moderators. These activities strengthen their spiritual connection with God and foster Islamic morals such as humility, responsibility, and courtesy. This consistency is key to developing religious character.

Religiosity is the implementation of religion in human life, encompassing the extent to which a person possesses, feels, practices, and embodies religious teachings in their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Warsiyah, 2018). Meanwhile, Fraser Wats and Mark Williams define religiosity as experience, knowledge, and worship that can bring a person closer to their Creator. Religiosity is the internalization of religious values within an individual related to belief (Widiandari et al., 2023). According to experts, religiosity has several goals and benefits, particularly in terms of developing self-identity, motivation, and well-being (Falikah, 2021). In this context, the "KANTIN" activity provides a medium that enables adolescents not only to cognitively understand religion but also to express it through concrete behavior within the community.

Discipline

According to Septirahmah (2021), discipline is obedience to respect and implement a system that requires people to submit to applicable decisions, orders, and regulations. In other words, discipline is the attitude of selflessly obeying established rules and regulations (Septirahmah & Hilmawan, 2021). Discipline is a person's awareness of carrying out duties and adhering to applicable regulations and social norms (Setiawan et al., 2023).

In this regard, it is implemented by the youth of the Al-Ikhlas Mosque and is reflected in their consistent punctuality for regular religious study sessions, leadership training, and social activities. Furthermore, they complete their committee responsibilities from planning to implementation, making this discipline not merely a formality but an integral part of their religious identity.

Responsibility

Responsibility is the ability to freely carry out obligations and duties, demonstrate dependability and consistency in words and actions, be trustworthy in all activities, and commit to active involvement in the community (Syifa et al., 2022). According to Ningsih (2023), responsibility is an individual's readiness to fulfill their obligations and accept the consequences of those actions (Ningsih & Rasyid, 2023).

At the Al-Ikhlas Mosque, this value is evident in the youth who consistently attend on time for various religious study activities, including "KANTIN" (Canteen), tadarus (Quran recitation), leadership training, and social activities, as well as completing committee assignments from start to finish. Their orderly attendance reflects that discipline has become part of their religious identity and sense of trust. Teenagers demonstrate concern when given technical tasks; documentation shows that 80% of teens arrive on time when assigned roles.

Independence and Leadership

Independence is a key factor determining adolescent self-confidence, and independent teens have been shown to have higher self-confidence (Sheilla Alma Tasya et al., 2023). According to Wardani et al. (2024), independence in adolescents is an individual's belief or confidence in their abilities, enabling them to overcome obstacles and achieve goals (Wardani et al., 2024). This suggests that when adolescents actively lead, they also learn to manage challenges and strengthen their resolve as a form of growth in maturity.

In this regard, the independence and leadership demonstrated by the adolescents at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque develop through real-world experiences: from drafting proposals to designing and controlling the implementation of

programs. The process of acting, evaluating, and adapting to challenges makes them better prepared to take on strategic roles in their community. Photos and reports record them creating event proposals, preparing equipment, and leading committee meetings.

Teamwork

Community service activities and preparations for major events demonstrate solid team coordination. According to Al-Tazkiyah (2024), prosocial behavior, such as helping and sharing, are fundamental manifestations of the values of al-birr (goodness) and piety from an Islamic psychological perspective (Fadlia & Casmini, 2024). This theory aligns with observations at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque, where adolescents not only work together to pack packages for community service or prepare for major events, but also support each other emotionally and spiritually. Sincerity in contributing, sincerity in helping, and patience when facing technical obstacles are part of a team culture that embodies the values of sincerity and gratitude.

Empathy and Social Care

Charity and community service activities at the Al-Ikhlas Mosque demonstrate that adolescents don't wait for orders—they take the initiative to help the community without being asked. Their actions include collecting donations, packing basic necessities, directly distributing them to recipients, and working together to clean the mosque grounds. This action is a tangible form of empathy and caring: adolescents learn to understand the needs of others and respond with sincere and coordinated actions.

Empathy itself, according to Lutfiyah et al. (2024), is a crucial psychological component that encourages individuals to show concern and voluntarily help others. In this context, empathy is not merely an emotion, but an active drive that drives adolescents to contribute significantly to the social welfare of their community (Sabirin & Jamalie, 2025). This aligns with research in the Prophetik Journal (2024), which states that children and adolescents with empathy are more likely to demonstrate prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and showing concern for others (Akhzalini, 2024).

These values demonstrate that character is formed through direct social experiences, often occurring in the context of religious activities. Religious activities can be an effective medium for developing religious character, discipline, and responsibility if implemented consistently and with the direct involvement of participants. In environments like the Al-Ikhlas Mosque in Serdang Asri 1, activities such as religious studies, leadership training, community service, and orphanages not only accustom young people to spiritual

activity but also foster personal integrity, social responsibility, and concern for others. The interactions that occur in these activities train adolescents to speak publicly, plan, work in teams, and understand and respond to the needs of their surrounding community.

This reinforces the view that character formation is not the result of one-way learning, but rather of active involvement in an environment that supports the internalization of values. In the context of Islamic education, this process is known as value internalization, which is the instillation of values through role models, habituation, and active participation in meaningful activities.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Character Formation

The documentation and observation reveal several key supporting factors that have contributed to the success of the character-building program. One of the primary factors is the consistency in scheduling, where the published activities are consistently carried out with discipline. This regularity provides the youth with a reliable structure, fostering a sense of routine and commitment to the program. Additionally, full support from the Mosque Management Board (DKM) and local community leaders plays a pivotal role. Their backing ensures the program has the necessary resources and community trust, which significantly boosts its effectiveness. Furthermore, the functional structure of the youth mosque organization is another contributing factor. This well-organized framework enables smooth coordination and the effective execution of activities, ensuring that each role is clear and responsibilities are properly distributed.

Despite these strengths, the character-building program faces several challenges that hinder its full potential. One of the main obstacles is the dependence on central figures, such as the mosque management team. When these key individuals are absent, many activities come to a halt, disrupting the continuity of the program. Financial limitations also present a challenge, as insufficient funding leads to delays or even cancellations of planned activities. Additionally, digital distractions, particularly the preference of some youth for social media over participating in activities, have become a significant issue. These challenges highlight the need for better resource management strategies, the strengthening of youth leadership capacity, and the integration of technology to ensure the character-building program can run more effectively and reach its full potential.

Researchers need to inform several important (original) field data obtained from interviews, observations, questionnaires, surveys, documents, and other data collection techniques. The findings are presented in full and are related to the pre-determined scope of research. Findings can be supplemented with tables, graphs, and/or diagrams. Tables and figures are numbered and titled.

Table 1. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Character Formation

Aspects	Findings	Implications
Activities	Routine and structured	Facilitating youth's role as active actors
Character values	Religious, responsibility, etc.	Formed through social experiences
Supporting factors	Structure, management, community	Ensuring sustainability
Inhibiting factors	Funding, key figures, digital	Need for managerial innovation

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the character development of youth through religious activities at Masjid Al Ikhlas Serdang Asri 1 has a significant positive impact. Activities such as regular study groups, basic leadership training, Quran recitation, and social activities like charity and community service provide tangible spaces for youth to develop religious values, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, independence, and leadership. Their active involvement not only enhances technical skills but also builds strong moral and spiritual character through direct experiences. The findings emphasize that effective character formation stems not only from educational material but also from social interactions and the habituation of values within a religious community.

From an academic perspective, this study reinforces the view that mosques are not just places of worship, but also institutions for character education based on Islamic values that are applicable and contextual. This study contributes to the development of a community-based character education model, bridging religious values with the personality development of youth in real-life contexts. The mosque, as a dynamic social space, proves to be a platform for transforming values and character when managed with a participatory and structured approach, as seen at Masjid Al Ikhlas. However, this study has limitations. Data was obtained solely through observation and documentation without involving interviews or group discussions that could delve deeper into the youth's personal perceptions and reflections. Additionally, this research is a case study at a single location and cannot be widely generalized. Therefore, future research is expected to expand methodological approaches and study locations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution of religious activities to youth character development in various social environments.

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