



THE ROLE OF QURAN TEACHERS IN SHAPING CHILDREN'S ISLAMIC CHARACTER IN PADANG LAWAS REGENCY



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Article History:

Submitted: September 01, 2025

Revision: November 19, 2025

Accepted: December 28, 2025

Published: December 31, 2025

Keywords: Qur'an teachers, Islamic character, religious education, Padang Lawas

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Abstract

This study examines the role of guru ngaji (Qur'an teachers) in shaping children's Islamic character in Padang Lawas Regency. Employing a qualitative field research approach, the study collected primary data through semi-structured interviews and direct observations involving Qur'an teachers, children, and parents in community-based Qur'anic learning settings. The findings indicate that Quran teachers contribute significantly to character formation by cultivating values such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, respectfulness, and solidarity. These values are developed through regular Quran learning routines, teachers' exemplary conduct, moral advice, and affectionate teacher-child interactions that reinforce religious habits and social ethics. The study also identifies supporting factors, including strong community involvement, a religious social environment, and teachers' sincerity and motivation. However, the role of guru ngaji faces several constraints, such as limited financial support, insufficient pedagogical training, children's increasing digital media exposure, and inadequate learning facilities. The study concludes that guru ngaji play a critical role in nurturing a faithful, morally upright, and socially responsible generation; therefore, sustained support from local government and Islamic educational institutions is necessary to strengthen community-based Qur'anic education and improve teachers' capacity and welfare.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important instrument in building human civilization. It involves conscious and planned efforts to develop the potential of students to become people of faith, piety, and noble character. In the context of Islamic education, this goal is in line with the noble ideals of Islam, which places knowledge and character as two inseparable elements. Islamic education is not only oriented towards intellectual intelligence, but also spiritual, moral, and social development. Therefore, Islamic education in Indonesia is not only carried out in formal institutions such as madrasas and schools, but also grows in the community in the form of non – formal education such as Quran recitation activities guided by Quran teachers.¹

However, despite their strategic role, issues surrounding Quran teachers are still often not adequately addressed. A number of studies on religious educators at the grassroots level show that the work of Quran teachers is often positioned as voluntary service (volunteerism) that is considered a form of worship, so that aspects of welfare and institutional support are not always a primary concern. In practice, this situation can result in uncertain remuneration, dependence on community donations, and limited access to learning resources, pedagogical training, and competency development. When this role is

¹ Faqirul Ilmi, "Why Should We Help Quran Teachers? 5 Important Reasons to Support Them," Baitulmaal Muamalat, 2024, <https://bmm.or.id/artikel/mengapa-kita-harus-membantu-guru-ngaji-5-alasan-penting-mendukung-mereka-2ny>.



not supported by a proper reward system, the social and moral burden on Quran teachers becomes even greater: they are expected to teach Quran recitation and shape children's character, but often do so with limited resources and without adequate social security.²

Quran teachers are central figures in community – based religious education. They are at the forefront of shaping a Qur'anic generation with Islamic character. Quran teachers serve not only as teachers of Quran recitation, but also as moral guides who instill noble values such as honesty, patience, and discipline. Through direct interaction with children, Quran teachers provide real examples of how Islamic teachings are applied in everyday life.³ Thus, Quran recitation activities at home or in the mosque are not only a place for learning to read the Hijaiyah alphabet, but also a very effective space for character building.

⁴In Indonesia's religious society, Quran teachers have deep social and spiritual significance. They are not merely religious teachers, but also the successors of classical Islamic scholarship that has been passed down from generation to generation. Through their exemplary behavior and dedication, Quran teachers instill Islamic values from an early age. As revealed by Ilmi, Quran teachers often work with sincerity without adequate financial support. Even so, their enthusiasm does not wane because they realize that teaching the Quran is a highly valued act of worship in the eyes of Allah. Ilmi's article refers to Quran teachers as "silent heroes" who protect the younger generation from becoming illiterate in the Quran and ensure they adhere to Islamic values.⁵

Technological developments and digital media have changed the patterns of social interaction among children. Many of them are more interested in online entertainment than in participating in Quran recitation activities. This condition has the potential to erode religious values and spiritual discipline. Therefore, the existence of Quran teachers is very important as a moral fortress amid the rapid flow of globalization and secularization.⁶ They are not only tasked with teaching the recitation of the Quran, but also serve as role models who teach manners, morals, and love for Allah and His Messenger.

Meanwhile, in an article written by Azhar on the website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, it is emphasized that Quran teachers are the guardians of the nation's morals.⁷ They are at the forefront in preserving Islamic values in society. Although they do not always receive material rewards, they play a very important role in building the religious character of children at the grassroots level. The Ministry of Religious Affairs assesses that Quran teachers contribute directly to the national education goal of creating a generation that is faithful, pious, and of noble character.⁸

In the local context, this phenomenon is highly relevant to the life of the community in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra Province. This area is known as one of the

² Ahmad Izudin Zakki, "The Role of Quran Teachers in Character Building Among Youth in Andan Hamlet, Cangu Village, Badas District, Kediri Regency" (Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, 2019), <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/14411/>.

³ Muhamad Zaryl Gapari, "The Role of Quran Teachers in Improving Student Learning Achievement at Al – Gafari Educational Institution," *Al-Faiza: Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 2 (2024): 178 – 91.

⁴ Nisa Robiah, Yusuf Zaenal Abidin, and Dyah Rahmi Astuti, "Public Relations Management in the Socialization of the Quran Teacher Incentive Program," *Humas: Journal of Public Relations Studies* 4, no. 2 (2021): 77 – 96, <https://doi.org/10.15575/reputation.v4i1.2088>.

⁵ Ilmi, "Why Should We Help Quran Teachers? 5 Important Reasons to Support Them."

⁶ Badri Azisa, Anil Hakimullah, "Empowering Quran Teachers Through the Qur'ani Sidogiri Method to Improve Arabic Reading Skills of the Quran," *Journal of Research & Community Service* 5, no. 1 (2025): 17 – 31.

⁷ Fadhly Azhar, "Reflecting on the Heroism of Quran Teachers," Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024, <https://kemenag.go.id/kolom/mendaras – realita – kepahlawanan – guru – ngaji – DXvGV>.

⁸ Azhar.

regions with a strong religious culture. The people of Padang Lawas are predominantly Muslim, who make religious values their daily guide. Islamic traditions are still very much alive in the community, for example, in the form of wirid (prayer), yasinan (Quran recitation), tahlilan (prayer for the dead), and especially Quran recitation lessons for children. Almost every village has Quran teachers who voluntarily open Quran recitation classes in their homes or in the mosque in the afternoon and evening.⁹

These Quran recitation activities not only teach children to read and memorize the Quran, but also instill discipline, politeness, and respect for teachers and parents. Quran teachers in Padang Lawas generally come from the local community, such as religious leaders, ustaz, or Islamic boarding school alumni. They are respected for their sincerity and high level of dedication. In a society that still upholds Mandailing customs and Islamic values, Quran teachers have a special social position as moral guides and role models.¹⁰

However, on the other hand, modernization and technological developments have brought new challenges to traditional education such as Quran recitation. Many children are now more interested in playing with gadgets or watching entertainment content than attending Quran recitation classes. In addition, many Quran recitation teachers face limited facilities, minimal financial support, and a lack of attention from local governments. In fact, Quran recitation classes have been proven to play a significant role in shaping children's personalities and morals.¹¹ Research conducted by Zakki shows that Quran teachers are able to improve children's ability to read the Quran while fostering religious attitudes, discipline, and responsibility in rural children.¹²

In addition, Gapari, in the journal *Al-Faiza: Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, found that Quran teachers serve as moral guides, motivators, and role models for students in instilling good character towards teachers, parents, and peers.¹³ However, most of these studies were conducted in other areas, so not much attention has been paid to the role of Quran teachers in the socio-cultural context of the Padang Lawas community. In fact, the religious character of the community and the strong local traditions provide their own dynamics in shaping the Islamic character of children in this area.

Historically, the people of Padang Lawas have strong roots in Islamic traditions and religious values. The existence of mosques and Quran recitation houses in almost every village reflects that religious activities are an integral part of social life. These religious traditions are passed down from generation to generation through Quran recitation teachers.¹⁴ In some areas, Quran recitation activities still use the traditional system: children sit in a circle on the floor, read the Quran together, and then listen to religious advice. The family atmosphere and the exemplary behavior of the teachers are effective means of instilling moral values such as honesty, patience, politeness, and mutual respect.

However, this phenomenon needs to be continuously strengthened and developed so that it is not lost in the tide of modernization. Global challenges demand methodological

⁹ Asrul Harahap, "Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools in Fostering Da'i Cadres in Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra," *Alhadharah: Journal of Da'wah Science* 21, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhadharah.v21i2.6832>.

¹⁰ Lina Mayasari Siregar Musaddad Harahap, "The Dynamics of Islamic Boarding Schools in Fostering the Religious Diversity of Students in Padang Lawas Regency," *JKIP: Journal of Educational Studies* 1, no. 2 (2020): 26–36.

¹¹ Azhar, "Reflecting on the Reality of the Heroism of Quran Teachers."

¹² Zakki, "The Role of Quran Teachers in Fostering Youth Morality in Andan Hamlet, Canggü Village, Badas Subdistrict, Kediri District."

¹³ Gapari, "The Role of Quran Teachers in Improving Student Achievement at Al-Gafari Educational Institutions."

¹⁴ Hotma Pasaribu, Ibnu Radwan, and Siddik Turnip, "Legal Views of Religious Leaders of Simangambat District, North Padang Lawas Regency Regarding Attending the Invitation of Walimatul 'Ursy Who Carried Out Endeng-Endeng," *Journal of Equity of Law and Governance* 4, no. 2 (2024): 300–306.

innovation, social support, and greater appreciation for Quran teachers. As emphasized by Ilmi, the support of the community and religious institutions for Quran teachers is a form of moral investment for the nation. Without this support, the process of shaping the Islamic character of children at the grassroots level could weaken.¹⁵

Based on this description, it can be understood that Quran teachers have a strategic role in maintaining the morality and Islamic identity of the younger generation, especially in Padang Lawas Regency. Their existence is not only important in terms of teaching the Quran, but also in the process of internalizing Islamic moral and spiritual values. Through a personal approach, exemplary behavior, and selfless dedication, Quran teachers are able to instill noble values in children from an early age.

However, research specifically discussing the role of Quran teachers in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas Regency is still very limited. In fact, given the unique culture, religiosity of the community, and the challenges of modernization faced by the Islamic Religious Education Board (), this topic is of high urgency for further study. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and describe the role of Quran teachers in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas Regency, as well as the Islamic values developed through Quran learning activities in the community.

Based on various previous research findings that show the important role of religious educators at the grassroots level, but still leave limitations in studies that specifically capture the practices of Quran teachers in shaping children's character in specific local contexts, this research is important to conduct. This study not only confirms the position of Quran teachers as teachers of reading and writing the Quran, but also examines more closely their role as moral mentors through exemplary behavior, habitual worship, reinforcement of manners, and moral guidance in their daily relationships with children and families. By focusing the study on the Padang Lawas community, this research aims to answer several fundamental questions, namely: what is the role of Quran teachers in shaping children's Islamic character, what values are developed in the process, and what factors support or hinder its implementation in the Padang Lawas community.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with field research that focuses on a deep understanding of the practices, meanings, and dynamics of the role of Quran teachers in shaping children's Islamic character within the community. The research location was set in Padang Lawas Regency, considering that community – based Quran recitation activities are still a vibrant and influential space for religious education in fostering children's religious values. Primary data was obtained directly from the field through the researcher's involvement in the social context being studied, so that the resulting picture reflects the empirical reality of the role of Quran teachers, the values instilled, and the factors supporting and hindering their implementation.¹⁶

Field data was collected through in – depth interviews and direct observation of several Quran teachers, students, and parents. The interviews were conducted in a semi – structured manner to explore the experiences, views, and methods of

¹⁵ Ilmi, "Why Should We Help Quran Teachers? 5 Important Reasons to Support Them."

¹⁶ Mestika Zed, *Library Research Methods* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2004), [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=zG9sDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=1.%09Zed,+M.++\(2014\).+Library+Research+Methods.+Jakarta:+Obor+Indonesia+Foundation.&ots=P9cneNCP0t&sig=81HKtmG0F2gTkJjs8qcVpZkxzMk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=zG9sDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=1.%09Zed,+M.++(2014).+Library+Research+Methods.+Jakarta:+Obor+Indonesia+Foundation.&ots=P9cneNCP0t&sig=81HKtmG0F2gTkJjs8qcVpZkxzMk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

Quran teachers in fostering children's morals. Observations were made to observe the process of learning to recite the Quran, social interactions between teachers and students, and the character values that emerged in these activities. All data obtained, both from literature and the field, were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.¹⁷ To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations, and literature reviews. Through this combined method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Quran teachers in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas Regency, both from a theoretical perspective and in actual practice in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the perspective of education experts, teachers are not only educators who transmit knowledge, but also educators and mentors who shape the attitudes, values, and behavior of students; therefore, the role of teachers includes pedagogical functions (teaching and managing learning), coaching functions (guiding and motivating), and evaluative functions (assessing the learning process and outcomes).¹⁸ In the realm of Islamic education, the role of religious teachers is more specific because it links ta'līm (teaching religious knowledge) with tarbiyah and ta'dīb (character and manners development), so that religious teachers are required to be role models (uswah), instill values, and provide moral guidance in everyday life.¹⁹ Based on this framework, Quran teachers can be understood as community-based religious educators who carry out operational roles such as teaching Quran reading and writing, instilling manners and discipline through habit formation, giving advice and correcting behavior, and setting an example that directly influences the formation of children's Islamic character.

In general, the results of this study show that Quran teachers have a strategic position in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas Regency. Through Quran learning activities at home and in the mosque, Quran teachers not only act as teachers of the Quran, but also as moral guides, instillers of religious values, and role models in daily life. In the context of the religious society of Padang Lawas, Quran recitation activities are an important means of instilling morals and strengthening social bonds between residents.

This study also found that the process of shaping children's Islamic character through Quran teachers takes place naturally and continuously, through the mechanisms of habit formation, advice, and role modeling. Islamic values are not taught theoretically alone, but are manifested in practical actions such as time discipline, politeness towards teachers, and responsibility for tasks. In addition, this study highlights supporting factors in the form of the religious culture of the

¹⁷ Sugiyono, *Quantitative Research Methods and R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010).

¹⁸ Maulana Akbar Sanjani, "The Duties and Roles of Teachers in the Process of Improving Teaching and Learning," *Serunai Journal of Education* 6, no. 1 (2020): 35–42.

¹⁹ Abdus Salam et al., "Behavior in Islamic Education," *Al-Ikhtiar: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71242/0yqjn912>.

community as well as challenges faced by Quran teachers, such as limited facilities and the influence of digital media on children.

Thus, this section will discuss in more depth the role of Quran teachers in shaping children's Islamic character, the values instilled, and the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation in the field. The following discussion is based on interviews, observations, and a review of literature relevant to the socio – religious context in Padang Lawas Regency.

The Role of Quran Teachers in Shaping Children's Islamic Character

From the results of observations and simple interviews with several Quran teachers in several villages in Padang Lawas, it was found that they not only teach the Quran, but also accustom children to behave well and always worship, such as praying before and after studying, maintaining the cleanliness of the place of study, respecting teachers and parents, and being disciplined, including in activities such as arriving on time. These values are an important part of Islamic character education, which emphasizes the formation of morals through habit formation.²⁰

The Quran teachers also play the role of spiritual motivators. They inspire children to love the Quran and make it their guide in life. In some cases, Quran teachers share exemplary stories from the Prophet and his companions to reinforce children's moral understanding. This method is very effective because it is delivered in simple language appropriate for the children's age. In addition, some Quran teachers also try to tailor their approach to the character of their students—for example, by praising those who are diligent or giving gentle advice to those who are lazy.

In general, the role of Quran teachers in Padang Lawas can be grouped into three main aspects:

1. Quran Teachers as Educators (*Mu'allim*)

As *mu'allim*, Quran teachers play a role in teaching the Quran and basic religious knowledge to children. This process is the main foundation in shaping Islamic character.²¹ In Padang Lawas, Quran recitation activities are usually carried out at the Quran teacher's house or a small mosque using traditional methods: children sit in a circle while reading Hijaiyah letters and correcting tajwid under the direct guidance of the teacher. Through these activities, children not only learn to read the Qur'an, but also understand the basics of faith, such as the importance of prayer, manners towards parents, and honesty. The simple teaching methods used by Quran teachers are tailored to the children's abilities, so that the learning atmosphere is warm, friendly, and full of family values.²²

In addition to teaching Quran reading skills, Quran teachers also function *to instill basic manners and morals*, which are an integral part of Islamic education. They emphasize not only cognitive aspects, but also affective and

²⁰ "Observation Results," 2025.

²¹ Evi Fitriana and Muhamad Khoiri Ridlwan, "Online Quran" *Journal of Social Science and Education* 2, no. 2 (2021): 203 – 20.

²² "Observation Results."

psychomotor aspects. In the learning process, Quran teachers accustom children to recite prayers, maintain cleanliness, and behave politely before starting lessons. These values reflect that Islamic education does not stop at academic abilities alone, but also includes the formation of behavior and attitudes that reflect faith. Therefore, the role of Quran teachers as *mu'allim* is very important in internalizing Islamic teachings through practical and contextual learning. As Erlina said, "Quran teachers not only teach children to read the Quran, but also shape their manners—such as politeness, cleanliness, and the habit of praying before studying. That is where Islamic character begins to grow."

In the context of Padang Lawas society, which is still steeped in Islamic values,²³ the presence of Quran teachers as *mu'allim* also plays a role in strengthening the tradition of Islamic scholarship at the grassroots level. They serve as a link between the legacy of classical Islamic education and the needs of modern society. Although many of them do not have a high level of formal education, their spiritual experience and dedication make teaching the Qur'an an effective medium for *da'wah*. Thus, Quran teachers in Padang Lawas contribute directly to building a religious society that is literate in the Qur'an and has noble character from an early age.

2. Quran Teachers as Mentors (*Murabbi*)

The role of a Quran teacher does not stop at teaching the text of the Quran, but also extends to being a *murabbi* – a mentor who instills Islamic values into the child's personality.²⁴ In this case, Quran teachers carry out a more profound educational function, namely shaping Islamic character through habit formation and moral supervision. Children are not only trained to read the Qur'an correctly, but are also guided to understand its meaning and practice it in their daily lives. For example, children are guided to perform prayers on time, respect their parents, and speak honestly.²⁵ This moral guidance is often given in the form of brief advice after reciting the Qur'an, so that Islamic values are instilled naturally through friendly conversation.

As *murabbi*, Quran teachers also act as caregivers who pay attention to children's emotional and spiritual development. They understand each child's different character and try to educate them with a gentle but firm approach. The personal relationship between teachers and students is built on the basis of love (*mahabbah*), not just an instructional relationship. In field interviews, several Quran teachers admitted that they often reprimand lazy or undisciplined children in a persuasive manner, such as by giving heartfelt advice, rather than harsh punishment. This shows that the guidance process

²³ Salsabila Nasution, "Teachers' Efforts to Foster Islamic Religious Education Values in Students at MTs Negeri 1 Padang Lawas, Barumon District, Padang Lawas Regency" (2024).

²⁴ Mainur Andriya, Srikandi Yudistira, and Muslim Afandi, "The Role of Teachers as *Murabbi* in the Islamic Perspective," *Edu-Riligia: Journal of Islamic and Religious Education Studies* 9 (2025).

²⁵ Zakki, "The Role of Quran Teachers in Character Development of Youth in Andan Hamlet, Canggung Village, Badas District, Kediri Regency."

carried out by Quran teachers contains values of love and exemplary behavior that are in line with the principles of *Islamic tarbiyah*. As Rani said:

"If there are children who are lazy or undisciplined, I never scold them harshly. I prefer to advise them gently so that they realize it themselves. This method makes children feel more appreciated and willing to change."

The function of *murabbi* is very relevant in the context of character education in Padang Lawas, because the community still upholds the values of togetherness and respect for elders. Quran teachers occupy a respected and trusted social position to guide children in moral and religious matters. Through intense and continuous interaction, Quran teachers shape children's behavior to be in accordance with Islamic teachings and polite local culture.²⁶ Thus, Quran teachers act as agents of character building who instill the values of faith, manners, and responsibility in children's daily lives.

3. Quran Teachers as Role Models (*Uswah Hasanah*)

In addition to being teachers and mentors, Quran teachers also serve as *uswah hasanah*—role models in behavior and morality. This exemplary behavior is the most effective educational method in shaping children's character, as children tend to imitate the behavior of those they respect.²⁷ Quran teachers in Padang Lawas display simple, humble, disciplined, and patient manners in teaching. They arrive early, dress modestly, speak softly, and treat children with affection. These attitudes indirectly become moral lessons that leave a lasting impression on the students. Through concrete examples of the Quran teacher's behavior, children learn the meaning of patience, sincerity, and responsibility.

The role of *uswah hasanah* has a strong influence because Quran teachers are often public figures in the social life of the community. They are involved in religious activities such as recitation of the Quran, tahlilan, and social activities. With consistent behavior between words and actions, Quran teachers build moral trust in the eyes of the community. Children who see this consistency will find it easier to understand and internalize the values taught, because they witness real examples every day. Therefore, the exemplary behavior of Quran teachers not only shapes children's characters, but also strengthens religious values in the community as a whole.

In this era of globalization and modernization, which brings various moral challenges, the role of Quran teachers as *uswah hasanah* (*good role models*) becomes increasingly important. They show that Islamic character education is not only conveyed through words, but also through real behavior that reflects Islamic values. From observations of the Padang Lawas community, which is still steeped in religious values and customs of politeness, the existence of Quran teachers as *uswah hasanah* has become a symbol of morality and sincerity. Thus, Quran teachers not only shape a generation that is skilled in

²⁶ M Saiyid Mahadhir, "Teacher Professionalism in the View of QS. Al-Isra': 84," *RAUDHAH Proud To Be Professionals Journal of Islamic Education* 3 (2018): 83–90.

²⁷ Mahadhir.

reading the Quran, but also a generation that has noble character, discipline, and a social spirit—in line with the ideals of Islamic education.²⁸

These roles are carried out with sincerity and without expecting material rewards. In fact, it is this sincerity that becomes the moral strength of Quran teachers and enhances their authority in the eyes of the community. Children who grow up under their guidance demonstrate politeness, discipline, and a strong religious foundation in their daily lives.

Islamic Character Values Instilled by Quran Teachers

This study found that the Islamic character values instilled by Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency are not limited to the cognitive aspect of understanding religious teachings, but also include the affective and behavioral dimensions that shape the child's personality as a whole. Through Quran recitation activities in residents' homes, Quran teachers instill moral, spiritual, and social values that form the foundation of children's daily lives.²⁹ They not only teach the ability to read and understand the Quran, but also guide children to practice Islamic values in real actions such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect for parents and others. This study found that the Islamic character values instilled by Quran teachers in Padang Lawas include several main dimensions, namely:

First, religious values. Children are accustomed to reading the Qur'an every day, praying, and maintaining cleanliness as part of their faith. Religious values are the main foundation instilled by Quran teachers in Padang Lawas. As observed in the Quran recitation process, children are accustomed to reading the Quran every day as a form of spiritual approach to Allah SWT. Before reciting the Quran, children are accustomed to reading prayers, and in some places, they also perform the Isha prayer in congregation before going home.sobser.³⁰ Quran teachers emphasize the importance of starting every activity with prayer and instilling good habits in every activity. Religious habits like this shape children's spiritual awareness from an early age, so that they grow up with a strong sense of piety and are accustomed to associating every activity with the values of worship.

Second, the value of discipline: Discipline is an important character trait that is built through the routine of Quran recitation activities. In various Quran recitation centers, the schedule is set consistently, generally starting after Maghrib prayer until just before Isha prayer. The habits of arriving on time, bringing recitation equipment, and completing the daily reading target are all valuable exercises in discipline. Through this routine, children learn that discipline is not only an obligation at the Quran recitation center, but also part of Islamic morals that must be applied in school and family life.³¹

Third, respect and manners: Quran teachers play a major role in instilling manners in their students. Each child is taught to kiss the teacher's hand when

²⁸ "Observation Results."

²⁹ Siti Kholijah et al., "Community Empowerment Through the Maghrib Quran Recitation Program for Children in Aek Nauli Village, Hulu Sihapas District," *JUTEQ: Journal of Theology & Interpretation* 2, no. 1 (2025): 81 – 88.

³⁰ "Observation Results."

³¹ "Observation Results."

arriving and leaving as a symbol of respect. They are also guided to speak politely, listen attentively, and not raise their voices in front of older people. In the religious culture of Padang Lawas, which still upholds traditional values, this attitude of respect is a tangible manifestation of the implementation of Islamic morals in social life. Quran teachers teach that knowledge will not be blessed without manners, so instilling politeness is an integral part of the process of learning to recite the Quran.

Fourth, the value of responsibility: In Quran recitation activities, each child is given a small responsibility, such as taking care of the Quran, writing instruments, or the cleanliness of the room. This responsibility seems simple, but it has a profound meaning for the character building of children. Quran teachers instill the understanding that taking care of the Quran and the cleanliness of the learning environment is part of respecting knowledge and worship. From observations, it can be seen that children who are accustomed to being given responsibilities show changes in attitude, becoming more independent and caring towards their surroundings. Thus, the value of responsibility does not only appear in the context of learning, but also extends to their home and school life.

These values form the moral foundation of children that applies not only in Quran recitation activities but also in their daily lives at home and school. In the context of Islamic education, these values are a tangible manifestation of the integration between knowledge and practice, between cognitive learning and affective character building. Quran teachers become the main intermediaries in instilling these values through simple methods such as habituation, exemplary behavior, and advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*). The strength of this method lies in the warm emotional relationship between teachers and students, which allows moral messages to be absorbed deeply.

Supporting and Hindering Factors

In the process of shaping children's Islamic character through the role of Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency, it was found that the success of this program is inseparable from various supporting and inhibiting factors in the field. These factors are interrelated and affect the effectiveness of Quran recitation activities carried out in the community. On the one hand, support from the community, the religious environment, and the dedication of Quran teachers are the main drivers in instilling Islamic values in children. However, on the other hand, there are also challenges such as limited facilities, low attention from some parents, as well as economic and time factors that sometimes hinder the smooth running of Quran recitation activities. An analysis of these factors is important for to understand the extent to which the role of Quran teachers can be optimized in shaping the Islamic character of the younger generation in Padang Lawas.

Based on interviews with Erlina, a Quran teacher in Padang Lawas Regency, she explained that the continuity of Quran recitation activities is inseparable from social support and strong religious conditions in the community. She stated,

Alhamdulillah, here the community is still very concerned with Quran recitation activities. Parents feel obliged to send their children to Quran recitation classes because it has become a tradition passed down from generation to generation.

Our environment is also very religious, with Quran recitation and wirid activities held almost every week. We Quran teachers also teach sincerely, not solely for the reward, but because we want to shape children to love the Quran and have good morals.

From the results of this interview, it can be understood that the supporting factors for Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency are supported by several factors, including: *First*, social support from the community. The results of the study show that social support from the community is a major factor that strengthens the role of Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency. The tradition of learning to recite the Quran is deeply rooted and considered a moral obligation for every child, not just an option. The community views Quran teachers as respected figures who play an important role in shaping the morals of the younger generation. Many parents voluntarily send their children to Quran classes after school, even without being asked. They realize that the religious education provided by Quran teachers complements the formal education their children receive at school.

Second, the religious conditions of the community. Another very strong supporting factor is the religious conditions of the Padang Lawas community, which is predominantly Muslim and still upholds religious values. The Islamic atmosphere is reflected in the community's habit of carrying out religious activities such as recitation, wirid, and commemoration of Islamic holidays, which are routinely held at the village level. This religious environment creates an atmosphere conducive for children to grow up in a spiritual environment.³² Quran teachers feel helped because the values they teach at the Quran recitation classes are also reinforced by religious practices at home and in the community. In addition, the presence of religious figures such as ustaz and mosque imams also serves as partners in strengthening the moral development of children. Thus, the religious character of the community becomes a social foundation that supports the effective formation of Islamic character through Quran recitation activities.

Third, The motivation and sincerity of Quran teachers . This factor has proven to be very influential in maintaining the continuity of Quran recitation activities in Padang Lawas. Quran teachers generally carry out their duties with high intentions of worship and sincerity, not because of material incentives. Based on the results of the interview with Ernila above, it shows how great the sacrifices that Quran teachers make are, and they continue to teach consistently even though there is no balance between their sacrifices and their income. In fact, from the observations, there are still many Quran teachers who do not charge any fees at all. They view teaching the Quran as a form of charity that has great rewards. It is this sincerity that keeps Quran recitation activities alive, despite limited facilities and financial support.

This study also found that behind the success of Quran teachers in instilling Islamic character values, there are various obstacles that pose real challenges in the field. Some of these obstacles are structural, cultural, and technological in

³² Musaddad Harahap, "The Dynamics of Islamic Boarding Schools in Fostering the Religious Diversity of Students in Padang Lawas Regency."

nature, all of which affect the effectiveness of Quran recitation activities. In an interview, Quran teachers such as Ayyub said that there are still many challenges faced by Quran teachers in carrying out their role in society. He said:

We teach Quran recitation with the intention of worship, but there is still no serious attention from the government. There is almost no financial assistance or facilities. In addition, we have never received more modern teaching training or strategies that are suitable for the children's conditions, so our methods are still traditional like in the past. On the other hand, many children are now influenced by cell phones and social media, which reduces their interest in reciting the Quran. Sometimes it is difficult to get them to focus, especially if they are used to playing games.

From the results of this interview, it can be concluded that there are at least four challenges for Quran teachers in Padang Lawas, namely:

First, Lack of financial support and attention from local government . The results of the study show that one of the main obstacles faced by Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency is the limited financial support from the government and other institutions. Most Quran teachers carry out their duties voluntarily without receiving a fixed salary. They rely on voluntary assistance from the community in the form of alms or donations. This situation often hinders Quran recitation activities in terms of providing learning tools such as mushaf, lighting, and other facilities. The lack of attention from the local government has also resulted in the absence of special programs for the empowerment or recognition of Quran teachers. In fact, they play a major role in shaping the morals and character of the younger generation. Nevertheless, Quran teachers continue their service with high enthusiasm and sincerity, making the teaching of the Quran a form of worship and social responsibility.

Second, Lack of pedagogical training for Quran teachers. Most Quran teachers in Padang Lawas still use traditional teaching methods, such as reading and reciting verses without much variation in learning strategies. Observations and interviews show that many Quran teachers have never participated in pedagogical training or training in Quran teaching methods appropriate for child development. This has an impact on their lack of ability to adapt their teaching style to the diverse needs of their students. As a result, children sometimes feel bored or uninterested in the learning process. In addition, limited pedagogical knowledge makes it difficult for Quran teachers to integrate character values contextually into Quran recitation activities. These findings indicate the need for support from Islamic educational institutions and local governments to organize training for Quran teachers so that the quality of learning can improve continuously.

Third, The influence of digital media on children's interests The development of digital technology poses a new challenge for religious education in Padang Lawas. Based on observations, children now spend more time on their gadgets, playing games, or watching online entertainment content than participating in Quran recitation activities.³³ This phenomenon has led to a decline in interest and

³³ Achmad Supriyanto Khairun Nisa', "The Impact of Mobile Phones on Education in Indonesia, Especially on Children," *PROSIDING Faculty of Education*,

concentration in learning the Quran. Quran teachers admit that they often face difficulties in getting children to focus and arrive on time for Quran recitation classes due to the strong appeal of the digital world. In addition, the lack of supervision from parents exacerbates the situation, so that children tend to prefer entertainment activities over spiritual guidance. This condition calls for a new approach to Quran recitation methods that are more interesting and adaptive to the times without losing the fundamental values of Islam.

Fourth, limited learning facilities. Another obstacle is the limited learning facilities, both in terms of space, equipment, and environmental comfort. Many Quran recitation activities are carried out in the living room of the Quran teacher's house or in a mosque with limited facilities. Some teachers also find it difficult to provide learning aids such as blackboards, small tables, or additional books for studying tajwid and makhraj. This situation means that the learning process is not always optimal, especially when there are a large number of students. However, these limitations do not dampen the children's enthusiasm for continuing to attend classes, as Quran recitation has become an important part of the social and spiritual life of the people of Padang Lawas.

From the various obstacles found in this study, it can be concluded that the role of Quran teachers in Padang Lawas Regency is carried out amid quite complex limitations. Although they have high enthusiasm and sincerity, challenges such as minimal financial support, lack of pedagogical training, the influence of gadgets on children's interests, and limited learning facilities are factors that need immediate attention. This condition shows that the role of Quran teachers is still carried out independently with the social support of the community, without a structured guidance system from the local government or religious institutions. Therefore, synergy between the government, Islamic educational institutions, and the community is needed to provide training, facilities, and rewards for Quran teachers so that they can continue to play an optimal role in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas. With adequate support, the dedication of Quran teachers can develop into a real force in the Islamic education system () to build a generation with noble character and a firm commitment to the values of the Quran.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Quran teachers play a very strategic role in shaping the Islamic character of children in Padang Lawas Regency. In a social context that is still religious and upholds Islamic values, Quran teachers act not only as teachers (*mu'allim*), but also as mentors (*murabbi*) and role models (*uswah hasanah*) for children. Through Quran recitation activities at home or in the mosque, they instill religious values such as piety, love for the Quran, discipline, responsibility, manners, and a spirit of togetherness and mutual assistance. These values are formed through habits, role models, and close social interaction between teachers, students, and the community.

The success of this character – building process is supported by social and cultural factors such as strong community support, the religious conditions of the

Padang Lawas community, and the motivation and sincerity of Quran teachers in carrying out their duties. However, this study also found a number of obstacles that need attention, including limited financial support, lack of pedagogical training, the influence of gadgets on children's interests, and inadequate learning facilities.

Therefore, in order for Quran teachers to play an optimal role in shaping the Islamic character of the younger generation, continuous support from local governments, Islamic educational institutions, and the community is needed. This support can take the form of professional training, facility assistance, and recognition of their dedication. If these factors are fulfilled, Quran teachers will continue to be at the forefront of building a generation that is faithful, has noble character, and is ready to face the challenges of the times without losing their Islamic identity.

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