



PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELAGIOUS CHARACTER AMONG ORPHANED STUDENTS AT BAITUL QUR'AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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Submit Tgl: 21-Agustus-2026

Diterima Tgl: 26-Agustus-2026

Diterbitkan Tgl: 07-September-2026

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui proses pembentukan karakter religius santri yatim piatu, problematika yang dihadapi, serta upaya yang dilakukan dalam mengatasi problematika tersebut di Pondok Pesantren Baitul Qur'an. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan (*field research*). Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data dilakukan melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses pembentukan karakter religius santri dilakukan melalui berbagai kegiatan keagamaan yang terstruktur seperti shalat berjamaah, tilawah dan hafalan Al-Qur'an, muraja'ah, puasa sunnah, shalat tahajud, serta pemberian nasihat dan bimbingan oleh ustadz dan ustadzah. Namun dalam pelaksanaannya masih terdapat beberapa problematika, antara lain latar belakang keluarga santri yang berbeda, kondisi psikologis santri yatim piatu, perbedaan tingkat pemahaman dan kebiasaan keagamaan santri, serta keterbatasan tenaga pendidik dalam melakukan pembinaan secara maksimal. Untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, pihak pesantren melakukan berbagai upaya seperti pembiasaan kegiatan religius, pemberian bimbingan dan nasihat, serta penerapan kedisiplinan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Melalui upaya tersebut diharapkan santri mampu mengembangkan karakter religius yang kuat serta menerapkan nilai-nilai keagamaan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

Kata Kunci: Problematika; Karakter Religius; Santri Yatim Piatu; Pondok Pesantren.

Abstract: This study aims to examine the process of developing religious character among orphaned students, identify the problems encountered in the process, and analyze the efforts undertaken to address these problems at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. This study employed a qualitative approach using a field research design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was established through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that the development of students' religious character is implemented through structured religious activities, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation and memorization, muraja'ah, voluntary fasting, tahajjud prayers, as well as advice and guidance provided by ustadz and ustadzah. However, several problems remain, including differences in students' family backgrounds, the psychological conditions of orphaned students, differences in levels of religious understanding and habits, and limited educational personnel to provide optimal guidance. To address these problems, the pesantren implements various strategies, including habituation of religious activities, continuous guidance and advice, and the enforcement of discipline in daily life. These efforts are expected to strengthen students' religious character and encourage them to apply religious values in their daily lives.

Keywords: *Problem; Religious Character; Orphaned Students; Islamic Boarding School*

Cara mengutip Sopha, G. Z., & Daulay, A. F. (2026). Problems in the Development of Religious Character Among Orphaned Students at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. *JIS: Journal Islamic Studies*, 4(3), 771–778. <https://doi.org/10.71456/jis.v4i3.2604>

INTRODUCTION

The term *problematics* refers to conditions involving problems or difficulties that require resolution. In the context of education, problems can be understood as various obstacles that arise in the process of achieving educational goals due to a discrepancy between expected conditions and actual circumstances (Mazid & Nurmawati, 2024). Such problems need to be systematically identified and analyzed to formulate appropriate solutions and ensure that educational objectives can be achieved optimally (Hasriadi, 2022).

In the Islamic perspective, education is not merely oriented toward the development of intellectual abilities but also toward the cultivation of faith, piety, and moral character. One important aspect of this educational orientation is the development of religious character, which is reflected in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are consistent with religious teachings. Religious character serves as an essential foundation for Muslims because it is manifested not only in an individual's relationship with Allah but also in their attitudes toward themselves, other people, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, education should aim to develop individuals who possess not only religious knowledge but also the ability to internalize and practice religious values in everyday life (Daradjat, 1996).

The importance of religious character development is also emphasized in the Qur'an, particularly through Luqman's advice to his son as described in QS. Luqman/31:13. This verse illustrates that the cultivation of faith is a fundamental component of children's character development. Religious character does not develop instantaneously; rather, it requires continuous education, role modeling, habituation, supervision, and guidance. In this regard, the family and educational environment play important roles in instilling faith, piety, and moral values in children. Consistent education is expected to contribute to the development of strong personalities and encourage children to make religious values a guide for their everyday behavior (Shihab, 2008).

This condition becomes more complex when character development takes place among orphaned children. Orphaned students are children who have lost one or both parents, and therefore their experiences of family care and parental guidance may differ from those of children who continue to receive direct parental support. The loss of parents may create particular challenges in their social, emotional, and spiritual development. Differences in life experiences, family backgrounds, parenting patterns, and psychological conditions may influence the process through which religious values are internalized. Consequently, developing religious character among orphaned students requires an educational approach that emphasizes not only discipline and religious habituation but also guidance, role modeling, attention, and continuous support.

In this context, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have a strategic position as Islamic educational institutions that not only provide religious instruction but also shape

students' daily lives through intensive educational and caregiving systems. Various activities, such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation and memorization, *muraja'ah*, religious study sessions, voluntary fasting, *tahajjud* prayers, and the habituation of Islamic moral conduct, serve as important means of cultivating religious values in students' everyday lives. The structured environment of a *pesantren* allows religious values to be taught theoretically and simultaneously practiced through daily routines. Nevertheless, the existence of a religious educational system does not automatically ensure that the process of character development will occur without difficulties. Various challenges may arise, including differences in family backgrounds, students' psychological conditions, differences in religious understanding, habits acquired from previous environments, and limitations in the number of educators available to provide optimal guidance (Fikri et al., 2026).

Several previous studies have examined problems related to religious character development in different educational contexts. Mazid and Nurmawati (2024), for example, investigated problems in developing students' religious character through Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sei Kepayang Timur. Their findings indicated that religious character development was influenced by students' low awareness of participating in religious activities, inadequate supervision, and peer-environment influences. Meanwhile, Alkhairi and Achadi (2025) for example, investigated problems in developing students' religious character through Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 1 Sei Kepayang Timur. Their findings indicated that religious character development was influenced by students' low awareness of participating in religious activities, inadequate supervision, and peer-environment influences. Meanwhile, Alkhairi and Achadi (2025) also highlighted the increasingly complex challenges of character development among younger generations in the digital era. The rapid development of digital technology has provided benefits such as broader access to information, opportunities for creativity, and easier communication. However, it has also created new challenges related to moral values, integrity, and the development of young people's identities.

The findings of previous studies demonstrate that religious character development is influenced by various internal and external factors. However, most previous studies have focused on students in formal educational settings and have not specifically examined the experiences of orphaned students within Islamic boarding schools. Orphaned students have distinctive social and emotional experiences because they no longer receive direct parental care and guidance. This condition may create unique dynamics in the process of developing and internalizing religious character. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools have educational characteristics that differ from those of formal schools because learning, caregiving, religious habituation, and social interaction take place within a relatively intensive and continuous environment. Therefore, there is a need for further research to explore the problems associated with religious character development among orphaned students within the context of Islamic boarding school life.

Based on this research gap, this study was conducted at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School to examine the process of developing religious character among orphaned students, identify the problems encountered during the process, and analyze the efforts undertaken by the *pesantren* to address these problems. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the process of religious character development among orphaned students, identify the problems encountered in developing their religious character, and analyze the efforts undertaken by the

pesantren to overcome these problems. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational and caregiving practices in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in designing religious character development strategies that are more responsive to the needs and circumstances of orphaned students.

METHOD

his study employed a qualitative research approach with a field research design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems encountered in the development of religious character among orphaned students in their natural educational setting. Field research enables researchers to directly explore phenomena as they occur in the field and to understand the experiences, interactions, and practices of the research participants within their actual context (Abdussamad, 2021). The study was grounded in the importance of religious character development among students, particularly orphaned students who may require greater attention, guidance, and support in their spiritual and moral development. Accordingly, this study focused on examining the process of religious character development, the problems encountered during the process, and the efforts undertaken by the pesantren to address these problems.

The research was conducted at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. The location was purposively selected because the institution provides religious education and daily guidance for orphaned students within a pesantren environment. This setting was considered relevant for examining the implementation of religious character development as well as the various challenges encountered in the process. The research participants consisted of individuals who were directly involved in or had relevant experiences regarding the development of students' religious character, including pesantren administrators or caregivers, *ustadz* and *ustadzah*, and orphaned students. Participants were selected purposively based on their involvement in religious education, guidance, and the daily activities of the students.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly to examine the implementation of religious character development activities and students' behaviors in their daily lives. The observed activities included congregational prayers, Qur'an learning and memorization, *muraja'ah*, voluntary fasting, *tahajjud* prayers, religious learning activities, and other forms of religious habituation. Observation also enabled the researcher to identify students' responses to the rules, routines, and guidance implemented by the pesantren.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information from pesantren caregivers, *ustadz* and *ustadzah*, and selected orphaned students. The interviews focused on the process of religious character development, the forms of guidance provided, the problems encountered by students and educators, and the strategies implemented by the pesantren to address these problems. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to maintain a consistent focus while providing sufficient flexibility to explore information emerging during the interview process.

Documentation was used as complementary data to support the findings obtained through observation and interviews. Relevant documents included religious activity schedules, pesantren regulations, student activity records, and documentation of religious and

educational activities (Sahir, 2021). The use of multiple data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive information and compare findings across different sources.

Data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which involves three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). During the data condensation stage, information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was selected, organized, and focused according to the research objectives. The condensed data were then displayed in a systematic manner to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and themes related to the development of religious character and the problems encountered in the process. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions by continuously comparing the emerging findings with the collected data.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, the study employed triangulation of sources and data collection techniques (Sugiyono, 2013). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different participants, including pesantren caregivers, *ustadz* and *ustadzah*, and orphaned students. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. This process was intended to ensure consistency among the data and strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School

Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic educational institution operating under the auspices of the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Education Foundation. The school is located at Jl. Bandar Labuhan, Hamlet III, Tandukan Raga Village, Sinembah Tanjung Muda Hilir District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra 20362. The location of the pesantren is relatively strategic and accessible to the surrounding community, making it one of the Islamic educational institutions chosen by families seeking religiously oriented education for their children.

Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is committed to providing education that focuses not only on the mastery of knowledge but also on the development of students' religious character. The pesantren integrates the development of Science and Technology (*Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi* [IPTEK]) with Faith and Piety (*Iman dan Takwa* [IMTAQ]) in a balanced manner. Through this approach, the pesantren seeks to develop a generation that is intellectually capable while also possessing noble character and a strong personality.

One of the flagship programs of Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is the Qur'an memorization (*Tahfidz Al-Qur'an*) program, which aims to guide students in reading, memorizing, and understanding the Qur'an properly. This program represents one of the distinctive characteristics of the pesantren in developing a Qur'anic generation that regards the Qur'an as a guide for everyday life.

In addition, Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School instills various character education values through the habituation of religious activities, including congregational prayers, religious study sessions, Qur'an learning, and the development of *akhlakul karimah* (noble character) in students' daily lives within the pesantren. Through these activities, students are

expected to develop into religious, disciplined, independent, and socially responsible individuals.

In its efforts to improve the quality of education, Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School has also obtained an A accreditation rating, indicating that the institution has demonstrated a good standard of educational provision and has met the standards established by the relevant authorities. Through its various educational and character development programs, Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School seeks to produce a generation that is knowledgeable, morally upright, and prepared to face future challenges.

The Process of Religious Character Development among Orphaned Students at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School

Based on observations conducted at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, the development of religious character among orphaned students is implemented through various structured religious activities and the habituation of Islamic values in everyday life. In general, the pesantren environment was clean, well-organized, and relatively peaceful, providing a supportive atmosphere for students' worship and learning activities. Available facilities, including a hall used for congregational worship, Qur'ans, and well-organized classrooms, also supported the process of religious character development within the pesantren environment.

The development of students' religious character was evident in the implementation of various religious activities conducted routinely. One of the main activities was the performance of the five daily prayers in congregation at the pesantren prayer hall. Observations indicated that most students arrived on time to participate in congregational prayers, although several students still arrived after the *iqamah* had been recited. To improve students' discipline in participating in congregational worship, the pesantren administrators monitored attendance and recorded the names of students who arrived late as part of the evaluation of their discipline (Arfiyanto & Habibah, 2026).

In addition to congregational prayers, religious character development was carried out through Qur'an recitation and memorization activities. After performing the Maghrib prayer in congregation, the students continued by reciting the Qur'an and submitting their memorization to the *ustadz* or *ustadzah*. Qur'an memorization began with shorter surahs before progressing to longer ones. During these activities, some students demonstrated good reading and memorization abilities, while others still experienced difficulties and appeared less confident when presenting their memorization to their supervisors.

Another activity supporting the development of religious character was *muraja'ah*, or the repeated review of previously memorized Qur'anic verses, which was conducted after the congregational Fajr prayer. During this activity, students reviewed their previous memorization under the guidance of the *ustadz* or *ustadzah*. Some students were able to recite their memorization fluently, whereas others experienced difficulties recalling verses and therefore required assistance from their peers or supervisors. This activity also demonstrated cooperation among students, as they helped one another recall and correct their memorization.

In addition to worship and Qur'an memorization activities, religious character development was also fostered through moral guidance and religious advice. After the *muraja'ah* session, the *ustadz* generally delivered brief advice to students regarding the

importance of sincerity in memorizing the Qur'an and the need to develop good moral conduct in everyday life. Most students listened attentively, although several students were still less focused during the activity.

Interviews with the Head of Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School indicated that the students' religious character development system was implemented through various religious programs, including congregational prayers, voluntary fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, *muraja'ah* after the Isha prayer, *tahajjud* prayers at night, and *kultum* (short religious sermons) delivered alternately by students after the Fajr prayer. All of these activities were systematically scheduled as part of the pesantren's religious character development system. In addition, the methods used to develop students' religious character included religious habituation, advice, guidance, supervision, and motivation. These methods were implemented continuously by the *ustadz* and *ustadzah* to ensure that religious values were internalized by the students and reflected in their everyday behavior.

Theoretically, religious character development is a process of continuously instilling religious values so that they become attitudes and behaviors consistent with religious teachings. One effective method of character development is habituation and modeling. Regular religious practices can foster students' awareness and discipline in observing religious teachings in their everyday lives (Arfiyanto & Habibah, 2026).

The findings of this study demonstrate that religious character development at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is implemented through habituation and modeling. Regular congregational worship, Qur'an memorization, *muraja'ah*, and religious advice serve as means of instilling religious values in students. In addition, guidance and supervision from the *ustadz* and *ustadzah* play an important role in developing students' discipline, responsibility, and commitment to religious practices (Arfiyanto & Habibah, 2026).

This finding is consistent with the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad:

"Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble character." (Al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, Hadith No. 273).

The hadith indicates that one of the central purposes of the Prophet Muhammad's mission was to perfect human character and promote noble conduct. Therefore, moral and religious character development constitutes an essential component of education, including education within the pesantren environment.

In the context of Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, these moral values are instilled through various religious activities and the habituation of positive behavior in everyday life. Students are not only taught religious knowledge but are also guided to practice these values through their attitudes and behaviors, such as demonstrating politeness, discipline, mutual respect, and obedience in performing religious practices. Through guidance, supervision, and role modeling provided by the *ustadz* and *ustadzah*, the development of students' religious character can take place gradually. Consequently, students are expected to internalize noble moral values and apply them both during their stay at the pesantren and when they return to their communities (Mita Silfiasari & Ashif Az Zhafi, 2020).

Problems in the Development of Religious Character among Orphaned Students

Based on observations and interviews conducted at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, several problems were identified in the process of developing religious character

among orphaned students. These problems originated from both internal factors related to the students and external factors associated with the pesantren environment and the character development process.

One of the problems identified was the diversity of students' family backgrounds. Most of the students were orphans or children who had lost both parents and had experienced the loss of parental figures from an early age. This condition may result in some students having greater emotional needs than other children. Limited parental attention and affection may affect students' psychological conditions, including lower self-confidence, increased sensitivity, or difficulties adapting to the pesantren environment. These conditions may sometimes affect students' discipline in participating in scheduled religious activities (Muhammad Krisnowibowo et al., 2025).

Another problem concerned students' discipline and established habits. Not all students had the same level of religious education before entering the pesantren. Some students were not accustomed to performing religious practices regularly, such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and participation in other religious activities. Consequently, during the initial stages of character development, some students were still found to be less disciplined, arrived late for activities, or lacked concentration during learning sessions. This condition requires patience and more intensive guidance from the caregivers and *ustadz* at the pesantren.

Another challenge was the limited number of educators and caregivers available to provide optimal guidance to all students. The relatively large number of students sometimes made it difficult for the pesantren to provide intensive supervision and individualized guidance to every student. In fact, orphaned students may require more personal attention and an individualized approach in the process of character development (Maulida, 2024).

Theoretically, religious character development is influenced not only by formal learning but also by environmental factors, habituation, and role modeling provided by educators. The internalization of religious values requires a lengthy and continuous process involving habituation and concrete examples in everyday life. Therefore, the various problems that emerge in the development of religious character among orphaned students need to be addressed through approaches that are more humane, attentive, and consistent (Ainissyifa, 2014).

Thus, the problems in developing religious character among orphaned students at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School include differences in family backgrounds, differences in religious habits and levels of understanding, and limitations in the guidance process. Nevertheless, the pesantren continues to address these challenges through religious habituation, advice, and continuous guidance for students.

Efforts to Address Problems in Religious Character Development

Based on the findings at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, various efforts have been undertaken to address problems in the development of religious character among orphaned students. These efforts involve continuous guidance, the habituation of religious activities, and personal approaches between the *ustadz*, caregivers, and students (Nasution et al., 2025).

One of the main efforts is the implementation of religious habituation in students' daily lives. Students are required to participate in various religious activities, including

congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation and memorization, and regularly scheduled religious study sessions at the pesantren. These activities aim to instill religious values and develop students' habits of worship so that they become accustomed to practicing religious teachings in their everyday lives.

In addition to religious habituation, the *ustadz* and pesantren caregivers provide guidance and advice to students. Such guidance is provided both during classroom learning and in students' daily lives within the pesantren environment. Through this approach, caregivers seek to provide direction, motivation, and attention to students, particularly orphaned students who require emotional support and more intensive guidance. Another effort involves the implementation of discipline in carrying out the various activities established by the pesantren. Students are habituated to following the daily schedule, beginning with waking up in the morning, performing religious practices, participating in learning activities, and engaging in other scheduled activities. The implementation of discipline aims to develop students' sense of responsibility and obedience to the rules established by the pesantren (Surono & Mahfud Ifendi, 2021).

Theoretically, religious character development can be fostered through habituation, role modeling, and continuous guidance. A religious environment that consistently instills religious values can facilitate the internalization of those values among students. Within the pesantren context, *ustadz* and caregivers play an important role as role models in demonstrating religious practices and behavior to students (Adelia & Mitra, 2021).

Thus, the efforts undertaken by Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School to address problems in the development of religious character among orphaned students include religious habituation, guidance and advice, and the implementation of discipline in everyday life. Through these efforts, students are expected to develop strong religious character and apply religious values in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, the development of religious character among orphaned students is implemented through structured religious activities and the habituation of Islamic values in everyday life. These activities include congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation and memorization, *muraja'ah*, voluntary fasting, *tahajjud* prayers, as well as religious advice provided by *ustadz* and *ustadzah*. Through these habituation practices, students are guided to internalize the values of faith, discipline, responsibility, and *akhlakul karimah* (noble character).

In its implementation, several problems were identified, including differences in students' family backgrounds and emotional conditions, differences in religious understanding and habits prior to entering the pesantren, and limitations in the number of educators and caregivers. To address these problems, the pesantren consistently implements religious habituation, provides intensive guidance and advice, instills discipline, and applies personal approaches to students. These efforts are expected to support students in developing into religious individuals with noble character who are able to internalize and practice Islamic values in their everyday lives.

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