

***Dhikr*-Based Qur'anic Education and Early Religious Character Development of Young Learners**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35719/fenomena.v24i2.351>

Received: August 7, 2025

Revised: September 7,
2025

Accepted: September 18,
2025

Published: December 19,
2025

Abstract :

Developing religious character in elementary school children through Qur'anic *dhikr* practices often faces challenges, especially in bridging ritual recitation with deeper spiritual internalization. While previous studies highlight the general role of *tahfiz* and *dhikr* in character formation, little research has examined the operational use of specific Qur'anic verses in structured daily routines for young learners. This study explores the implementation of *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 in daily *dhikr* activities at the *Tahfidz Qur'an* Islamic Boarding School for Children *Raudlatul Falah* (PPATQ RF). It identifies its implications for the development of children's religious character. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through one-week participatory observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and parents, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to triangulate findings across interviews, observations, and institutional records. Results show that structured daily *dhikr* grounded in Qur'anic verses enhances children's spiritual discipline, emotional stability, and religious awareness. Challenges include children's physical adaptation to demanding schedules, limited comprehension of abstract spiritual meanings, and inconsistent family support. The study concludes that an integrated *dhikr* approach—linking physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions—significantly strengthens religious character formation. It demonstrates how operationalizing specific Qur'anic verses within a structured educational routine provides a replicable model for early character development.

Keywords: *Qur'anic Dhikr, Religious Character Education, Sūrat al-Insān, Elementary School Students*

Abstrak:

Pembentukan karakter religius pada anak usia sekolah dasar melalui praktik dzikir Qur'ani sering menghadapi kendala, terutama dalam menjembatani antara bacaan ritual dan internalisasi spiritual yang lebih mendalam. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya menyoroti peran umum *tahfiz* dan dzikir dalam pembentukan karakter, masih sedikit penelitian yang mengkaji penggunaan operasional ayat-ayat Qur'an tertentu dalam rutinitas harian yang terstruktur bagi anak-anak. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implementasi Surat al-Insan ayat 25–26 dalam aktivitas dzikir harian di Pondok Pesantren Anak-anak Tahfidzul Qur'an Raudlatul Falah (PPATQ RF) serta mengidentifikasi implikasinya terhadap pembentukan karakter religius anak. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kasus dengan teknik observasi partisipatif selama satu minggu, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan orang tua, serta analisis dokumen. Analisis tematik diterapkan untuk menelaah temuan melalui triangulasi data wawancara, observasi, dan dokumen institusional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dzikir harian yang terstruktur berdasarkan ayat-ayat Qur'an mampu meningkatkan disiplin spiritual, kestabilan emosi, dan kesadaran religius anak. Tantangan yang muncul mencakup adaptasi fisik anak terhadap jadwal yang padat, keterbatasan

pemahaman makna spiritual yang abstrak, serta dukungan keluarga yang tidak konsisten. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pendekatan dzikir yang terintegrasi—melibatkan aspek fisik, emosional, dan spiritual—secara signifikan memperkuat pembentukan karakter religius. Kontribusi penelitian terletak pada penunjukan bagaimana operasionalisasi ayat Qur'an tertentu dalam rutinitas pendidikan terstruktur dapat menjadi model yang dapat direplikasi untuk pengembangan karakter sejak dini.

Kata Kunci: *Dzikir Qur'ani, Pendidikan Karakter Religius, Surat al-Insan, Pesantren Tahfidz, PPAQ RF*

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How to cite: Taufikin, T., Sri Nurhayati, S., Makmur Harun, M., & Habib Badawi, H. (2025). *Dhikr-Based Qur'anic Education and Early Religious Character Development of Young Learners. Fenomena*, 24(2), 165–178. <https://doi.org/10.35719/fenomena.v24i2.351>

Publisher: Centre for Research and Community Service (LP2M), UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember

Introduction

Cultivating religious character from an early age has long been a central concern for educators and scholars in Islamic education (Ginting, 2024; Metcalfe & Moulin-Stožek, 2021). However, contemporary challenges—such as digital exposure, shifting family lifestyles, and increasingly secular social dynamics—have complicated efforts to instill religious and spiritual values in children (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2022; Rochim & Amal Khayati, 2023; Smoljo-Dobrovoljski, 2025). Prior studies emphasize that religious character education should begin in childhood, a period marked by heightened receptivity to spiritual internalization (Birhan et al., 2021; Syarnubi et al., 2021). Research further affirms that regular engagement in spiritual practices can establish durable patterns of religious character (French, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Given this context, *pesantren* remain strategic sites for embedding spirituality into children's daily lives, having historically proven effective in shaping their religious character.

Previous studies have highlighted *pesantren's* role in nurturing spirituality through Qur'an memorization (*tahfiz*) and dhikr-based pedagogies (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Lahmar, 2020). While *tahfiz* is well-documented for developing spiritual intelligence, few studies have examined how structured Qur'anic *dhikr* shapes the religious character of elementary-aged children (Albayrak, 2022; Siregar et al., 2022). Even research by Muhammad (2022), although recognizing the spread of *tahfiz*, stops short of analyzing how specific verses are embedded into daily routines (Abdullah et al., 2025). This limited scope reflects a gap: existing literature tends to describe dhikr in general terms, without clarifying its operationalization or long-term pedagogical impact.

One major issue in children's spiritual education is the development of a precise operational method for incorporating Qur'anic *dhikr* into daily practice. *Dhikr* often remains a verbal *ritual*, disconnected from routines that could enable sustained spiritual internalization (Chande, 2023; Siregar et al., 2022). Without integration into children's everyday rhythm, its transformative potential is diminished. Earlier literature calls for a structured and continuous approach to instilling values through scheduled dhikr routines. Several works stress the importance of applying specific Qur'anic verses, with Ibn Kathir (2001) noting that verse-based *dhikr* has more profound psychological and spiritual effects. Empirical findings also support this: structured Qur'anic dhikr enhances *spiritual* awareness and emotional stability (As'ad

& Hakim, 2022; Cheong, 2020; Wright, 2020). However, these contributions remain descriptive; they lack detailed accounts of how such verses are systematically operationalized in children's education.

The theoretical grounding of this study draws on embodied cognition (Castro-Alonso et al., 2024; Farina, 2021; Pande, 2021), which argues that routine, physicalized spiritual practices – not only verbal repetition – strengthen memory and internalization. Azra (2019) reinforces this, showing that *dhikr* synchronized with daily rhythms fosters positive emotional experience. However, most prior studies do not engage this framework to examine *dhikr* pedagogy, leaving unaddressed how embodiment and verse-specific routines intersect in children's education.

An overview of the literature reveals that, although *tahfīz* and general *dhikr* are well studied, the operationalization of specific Qur'anic verses – such as *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 – within *pesantren* remains unexplored. Neither Ibn Kathīr (2016) nor recent studies (Chanifah et al., 2021; Ulayyah & Abdussalam, 2022) provide concrete evidence of how these verses are practiced daily or affect children's character development (Budiayanti & Parhan, 2024; Masbur, 2022). This study addresses that gap by analyzing how *Sūrat al-Insān*, verses 25–26, is embedded into daily routines at PPATQ Raudlatul Falah (RF) in Pati, Central Java. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how verses 25–26 of *Sūrat al-Insān* are implemented in the children's daily *dhikr* practices at PPATQ RF, identify the challenges that emerge in operationalizing this Qur'anic *dhikr* approach, and evaluate its implications for the development of children's religious character. The novelty of this research lies in its operational exegesis of Qur'anic verses within the context of early education – an approach that remains rarely explored in *tahfīz*-oriented *pesantren*. The study introduces a structured model of Qur'an-based spiritual education by connecting daily routines with embodied cognition. Its primary beneficiaries include *pesantren* educators seeking to strengthen curriculum design, parents aiming to reinforce home-based religious routines, and policymakers interested in developing scalable character education models rooted in Islamic pedagogy.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach (Pahleviannur, 2022) to investigate the implementation of *dhikr* practices grounded in *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 within the educational context of PPATQ Raudlatul Falah (RF), located in Pati, Central Java, Indonesia. This methodological design aligns with the study's aim to deeply explore context-bound, multifaceted phenomena through rich, descriptive analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nurhayati, Judijanto, et al., 2025).

PPATQ RF was selected as a typical, information-rich *pesantren* where Qur'an-based routines are embedded across the daily schedule, making it suitable for examining practice-level operationalization (Hefner, 2022). *Sūrat al-Insān* 25–26 was chosen because the verses explicitly structure remembrance temporally – morning, evening, and night – and prescribe concrete modalities of worship (mentioning God's name, prostration, glorification). This temporal and practical specificity offers clear, observable anchors for children's daily routines and aligns well with theories of embodied and routine-based internalization of values (Azra, 2019; Varela et al., 2017). In short, these verses are theologically significant for *dhikr* and pedagogically tractable for character education in early childhood settings.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of informants directly relevant to the daily *dhikr* routines. The sample consisted of 18 elementary-aged students (ages 5–12) enrolled at PPATQ RF, three *tahfīz* instructors responsible for leading the *dhikr* sessions, and five parents who actively reinforce spiritual practices at home (Mukmin et al., 2020). The 18-student cohort was set to capture age variability across early and middle childhood within one *pesantren* cycle and to enable pattern comparison across time blocks (morning/evening/night) without overextending observation windows typical of a focused case study. The three instructors represent the complete set of teachers who lead and supervise the *dhikr* implementation across shifts, ensuring complete pedagogical coverage. Five parents were included in triangulating school routines with home reinforcement from families that actively continue the practices, supplying maximum information cases for the home–school interface. Data sufficiency was assessed during analysis; no new codes emerged in the final interviews and observation days, indicating thematic saturation within the case boundaries (Braun et al., 2019; Patton, 2025).

Data were collected using three primary qualitative techniques (McGillivray & Tóth, 2020): in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with teachers and parents to elicit their perspectives on implementing daily *dhikr* practices, the challenges they faced, and their perceived outcomes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity and nuance of participant responses (Patton, 2025). Open-ended questions encouraged elaboration, yielding rich narratives and contextual insights.

Participatory observations were conducted intensively over a period of one week, encompassing the major *dhikr*-related activities embedded in the school's routine. The observations included morning *tahfīz* sessions (from after *ṣalāt al-Fajr* until 6:30 a.m.), afternoon review periods (from after *ṣalāt al-ʿAṣr* until 5:00 p.m.), and evening sessions (from 6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.). The researcher also documented early morning rituals, which began at 3:00 AM, including obligatory bathing, *ṣalāt al-tahajjud*, *dhikr*, and review of memorization. Detailed field notes recorded the children's behavioral responses, emotional expressions, participation intensity, and overall engagement during the *dhikr* sessions. Document analysis served as a supplementary data source. Institutional documents—including daily schedules, curriculum frameworks, and individualized progress reports—were examined to corroborate observational data and interview findings. These documents provided valuable context and confirmed alignment between the school's stated pedagogical objectives and actual practices.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, using an interpretive framework grounded in *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To operationalize the verses as an analytical lens rather than mere inspiration, a deductive codebook was constructed from the verse components and their implied practices: (a) temporal anchors—"morning" (*bukratan*), "evening" (*aṣīlā*), and "night/long night" (*lailan ṭawīlā*); (b) modalities—"mention/remember" (*udhkur isma rabbika*), "prostrate" (*wasjud lahu*), and "glorify" (*sabbihhu*); and (c) expected character outcomes consistent with the literature—spiritual discipline, reverence/*khudūʿ*, emotional regulation, and *dhikr* awareness (Ekwonye et al., 2020; Graça & Brandão, 2024; Keating & Keating, 2023). These deductive codes were applied to interviews, observations, and documents

in parallel. In contrast, inductive/open coding captured emergent patterns (e.g., fatigue adaptation, comprehension hurdles, home reinforcement constraints) to avoid forcing data into a priori categories. Coding proceeded through: familiarization; initial deductive and inductive coding; category consolidation around verse–practice–outcome linkages; and theme synthesis connecting routines to character indicators. Cross-referencing between interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents enhanced analytical rigor. Member-checking was conducted with teachers and parents to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

Ethical protocols were strictly observed throughout the research process. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, including students' parents, teachers, and school administrators. Participant anonymity was maintained through coding, and all data were stored securely to uphold confidentiality.

Results And Discussion

Result

The Implementation of *Dhikr* Practice for Building Character in Children's Education based on *Sūrat al-Insān* Verses 25–26

In Islamic education, character formation emphasizes the early cultivation of *īmān* (faith), *'ibādah* (worship), and *akhlāq karīmah* (noble character). Field data at PPATQ RF showed that these values were integrated through structured *dhikr* routines anchored in *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26. Observations, interviews, and institutional documents revealed that the verses provided a temporal-spiritual framework, consisting of morning remembrance, afternoon review, evening devotion, and night prostration. Table 1 summarizes the triangulated data. The evidence shows that *dhikr* practices are consistently embedded in daily life, with teachers, parents, and students acknowledging their impact on concentration, discipline, and tranquility.

Table 1

Implementation of Daily Dhikr Practices at PPATQ RF

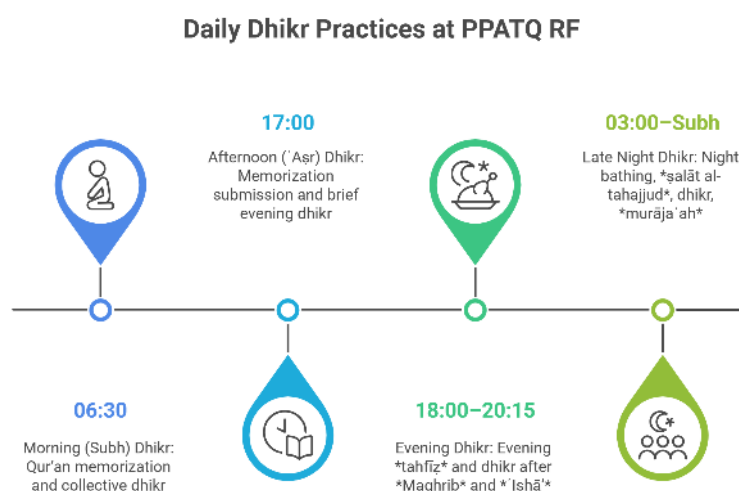
Time of Dhikr / Verse	Activities	Interview Findings	Observational Notes	Document Analysis
Morning (Subh-06:30) "Udzkur isma rabbika bukratan."	Qur'an memorization, collective <i>dhikr</i> (<i>tasbīḥ</i> , <i>tahlīl</i> , daily supplications)	Teachers noted that morning <i>dhikr</i> enhances students' concentration for learning (<i>Ustādh</i> , Interview, May 2025). Parents reported improved discipline in early rising (Parent, Interview, May 2025).	Students appeared focused and enthusiastic during morning <i>dhikr</i> . High engagement was observed during memorization sessions (Observation Notes, May 2025).	The daily schedule designates morning <i>dhikr</i> as a fixed activity following <i>ṣalāt al-Subḥ</i> and prior to memorization (Curriculum Document, 2025).
Afternoon ('Aṣr-17:00) "Wa 'aṣīlā"	Memorization submission, brief evening <i>dhikr</i>	Teachers stated that evening sessions strengthen retention and promote calmness before nightfall (<i>Ustādh</i> , Interview, May 2025).	Students generally displayed discipline during evening <i>dhikr</i> , though some showed signs of physical fatigue (Observation Notes, May 2025).	Daily evaluation logs indicate consistent completion of evening memorization and <i>dhikr</i> targets

		2025).	May 2025).	(Student Evaluation Records, 2025).
Evening (18:00– 20:15) “Wasjud lahu wa sabbihhu”	Evening dhikr <i>Maghrib 'Ishā'</i>	<i>tahfīz</i> , after and Parents observed that evening routines helped children sleep more peacefully (Parent, Interview, May 2025).	Students participated regularly and calmly in evening dhikr. Observed behaviors indicated tranquility and high focus (Observation Notes, May 2025).	The institutional schedule explicitly includes this session as a non-negotiable part of the daily routine (Daily Schedule Document, 2025).
Late Night (03:00– Subh) “Lailan ṭawīlā”	Night bathing, <i>ṣalāt al-tahajjud</i> , dhikr, <i>murāja'ah</i>	Teachers described this as the most effective routine for fostering spiritual discipline (<i>Ustādh</i> , Interview, May 2025). Parents confirmed positive changes in their children's spiritual discipline (Parent, Interview, May 2025).	Most students adhered well to the routine, although a few struggled to adjust initially (Observation Notes, May 2025).	Institutional regulations mandate this activity in formal boarding school policies (<i>Pesantren</i> Guidelines, 2025).

Note. Field Interviews, Observation Notes, and PPATQ RF Institutional Documents, 2025

To visualize this routine holistically, a flowchart of daily dhikr practices (Figure 1) illustrates how verse-based scheduling structures the entire day.

Figure 1
Daily Dhikr Practice at PPATQ RF



Challenges in Dhikr Implementation

Despite positive outcomes, challenges emerged during implementation. Three main difficulties were consistently identified:

1. Physical Fatigue – Children must adapt to early wake-ups and intensive night routines.
2. Cognitive Readiness – The abstract meaning of dhikr was difficult for younger learners to grasp without repeated explanation.
3. Home Reinforcement: Parents struggled to maintain routines due to work constraints and limited pedagogical skills.

In-depth interviews and direct observations revealed several challenges in implementing the dhikr routines. First, physical adjustment to the early morning schedule required time. As *Ustāz AA* explained: *“Children need time to adapt to the demanding routine, particularly waking at night and bathing early, but eventually they adjust.”* Teachers noted that individualized support was often necessary to help children adapt to this new rhythm. Second, early childhood cognitive readiness posed a unique challenge, particularly in understanding the abstract meanings of dhikr. *Ustāzah F* stated: *“We often need to explain the meaning of dhikr repeatedly to help children move beyond mere recitation toward comprehension.”* Parents also expressed difficulty continuing the routine at home due to work commitments and limited understanding. One parent, *S*, remarked: *“We really want to continue this practice at home, but we are often hindered by our schedules and lack of know-how in guiding our children.”* These findings are condensed in Table 2.

Table 2
Challenges in Dhikr Implementation

Challenge	Description
Physical Fatigue	Children need time to adjust to early morning routines
Cognitive Readiness	Abstract concepts of dhikr are complex for young learners.
Home Reinforcement	Not all parents can maintain the routine at home.

Note. Field Interviews, Observation Notes, and PPATQ RF Institutional Documents, 2025

The table confirms that challenges are both institutional and personal, as well as familial. Observations revealed fatigue in the first days of night routines, while interviews with parents highlighted the difficulty of sustaining practices at home.

Implementing dhikr based on *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 yielded significant outcomes in shaping children’s religious character. First, observation showed increased reverence and focus during worship activities. As *Ustāz Z* remarked: *“Children appear more composed and focused, especially during prostration at night.”* This was visibly demonstrated through their solemn and unhurried prostrations during group dhikr sessions. Second, teacher and parent interviews indicated that the intensive dhikr routine cultivated strong spiritual discipline. A parent, *AG*, shared: *“I have seen a major transformation in my son – he now wakes up willingly at night and even reminds me to do dhikr with him.”* Children were observed consistently performing the five daily prayers and demonstrating initiative in practicing *dhikr*, without needing prompts from teachers or parents. Third, children showed improved emotional composure and self-regulation following the structured *dhikr* practice. As *Ustāzah N* noted: *“The children are more patient and emotionally stable – this is clearly reflected in their daily interactions at the boarding school.”* The institution’s daily logs also documented

this emotional development, which tracks children's spiritual and emotional growth. Table 3 below summarizes the findings on implications for religious character formation.

Table 3

Character Values and Dhikr Outcomes

Character Value	Observational Indicator	Supporting Verse
Humility before Allah (<i>khudū</i>)	Children prostrate solemnly and without haste	" <i>Wasjud lahu</i> "
Spiritual Discipline	Children wake up at Night consistently	" <i>Sabbiḥhu lailan ṭawilā</i> "
Dhikr Awareness	Children recall <i>dhikr</i> times independently	" <i>Udzkur isma rabbika</i> "
Emotional Calmness	Children show post- <i>dhikr</i> tranquility	<i>Reflected in daily Qur'anic routines</i>

Note. Field Interviews, Observation Notes, and PPATQ RF Institutional Documents, 2025

Table 4

Novelty in Implementing Qur'anic Dhikr Based on Sūrat al-Insān Verses 25–26

Aspect	Previous Studies	This Study (Novelty)
Operationalization	General dhikr, not linked to specific Qur'anic verses	Dhikr specifically based on Sūrat al-Insān 25–26
Curriculum Integration	No formal integration with daily routines	Fully embedded into the daily curriculum of the boarding school
Pedagogical Approach	General religious pedagogy without embodied cognition theory	Embodied cognition approach (Varela et al., 2017)
Impact Evaluation	General observations only	In-depth evaluation through interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis

Based on these findings, implementing *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 as an operational framework for dhikr fosters a positive and consistent spiritual rhythm in children's lives. The structured routine enhances children's spirituality and improves their emotional resilience and behavioral regulation. This study thus confirms the hypothesis that daily Qur'an-based dhikr routines can effectively nurture comprehensive and sustainable religious character development in early childhood.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that the structured implementation of Qur'anic *dhikr* based on *Sūrat al-Insān*, verses 25–26, within the daily practices of the *Tahfidz Qur'an* Islamic Boarding School for Children (PPATQ Raudlatul Falah) significantly contributes to shaping the religious character of elementary school students (Farida et al., 2023; Harahap et al., 2019). These findings align with previous studies emphasizing that spiritually rooted character education effectively nurtures enduring personal and moral development in children (Adiyono et al., 2025; Azra, 2019; Basiroh et al., 2025; Nurhayati, Sholihah, et al., 2025; Nurhayati & Parhan, 2024; Taufikin, Nurhayati, Majeed, et al., 2025). Moreover, they reinforce Varela et al.'s (Varela et al., 2017) theory of embodied cognition, which asserts that physical engagement in spiritual routines strengthens the internalization of values more effectively than verbal expressions alone.

Through in-depth interviews and observations, it became evident that students

experienced notable transformations in spiritual discipline, emotional stability, and religious awareness. These outcomes corroborate Keating & Keating (2023; Yust & Reibel, 2023)'s findings that structured and consistent dhikr practices foster heightened spiritual consciousness and emotional regulation (Bryant & Astin, 2008). Similarly, Azra (2019) argues that sustained engagement in religious rituals has a positive influence on children's affective and behavioral development.

The study further affirms *Ibn Kathīr's* (Katsir, 2016) interpretation that dhikr grounded in specific Qur'anic verses produces more profound psychological and spiritual impacts. Field observations documented students' sincerity and focus, especially during nighttime dhikr, reflecting a faithful embodiment of the verse: "*And during a part of the night prostrate to Him and glorify Him throughout the long hours of the night*" (Q.S. al-Insān [76]: 26).

The interplay of three reinforcing factors can explain the observed transformations. *First*, internal motivation increased as children experienced positive emotions during dhikr, transforming obligation into a willingness, consistent with findings in spiritual psychology (Ekwonye et al., 2020; Graça & Brandão, 2024). *Second*, the school environment provided structured routines, collective reinforcement, and teacher modeling, creating a disciplined rhythm that encouraged consistency. *Third*, family influence played a decisive role: when parents supported the routines at home, children demonstrated stronger internalization, echoing recent studies on the family's role in children's faith formation (Basiroh et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025). These converging forces suggest that dhikr-based character education is most effective when motivation, environment, and family work together as a unified system.

The findings have broader implications for moral resilience and long-term religious development. When Qur'an-based routines are practiced consistently, they cultivate habits that extend beyond childhood, enabling adolescents to resist secular pressures and moral erosion (Riley et al., 2020). Conversely, inconsistency in practice – for instance, when families fail to reinforce routines – risks weakening the continuity of spiritual memory, leaving children more vulnerable to distractions and stressors (Chen et al., 2021; Yust & Reibel, 2023). In this sense, dhikr-based pedagogy can serve as a protective factor, fostering spiritual awareness, emotional resilience, and ethical decision-making skills that are essential in later life (Graça & Brandão, 2024). When anchored in verse-specific routines, the implication is that Qur'an-based character education can shape a child's enduring moral orientation and prepare them for future social and psychological challenges.

While gradual habituation, personalized mentoring, and parental involvement are crucial, further steps should be taken: *First*, Curriculum policy integration: Qur'anic verse-based dhikr (e.g., *Sūrat al-Insān* 25–26) should be explicitly embedded in *pesantren* curricula as structured daily practices, supported by clear lesson plans and teacher training modules. *Second*, Parental training programs: Workshops can equip parents with simple strategies for continuing dhikr routines at home, reducing the school-home reinforcement gap. *Third*, Monitoring and evaluation tools: Schools should adopt standardized instruments to track changes in children's spiritual discipline and emotional well-being.

Compared to earlier studies, the primary contribution of this research lies in its integrative approach and the operationalization of specific Qur'anic verses in early childhood religious education within a *tahfiz*-based Islamic boarding school. Most

prior research discusses dhikr in general terms, without elaborating on specific verses (Keating & Keating, 2023; Yust & Reibel, 2023). This study thus presents an apparent novelty by offering a structured model for integrating *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 into a formal character education framework. The novelty of this study is summarized in Table 4.

A synthesis of these findings with the embodied cognition framework reveals that *dhikr* practices involving physical movements, such as prolonged prostration and structured nighttime routines, facilitate a more lasting internalization of spiritual memory (Arifin et al., 2023; Poll & Smith, 2003). Students who consistently followed these rituals displayed more stable and self-regulated religious behaviors than those who did not follow such routines. Moreover, this study expands upon Azra's (2019) insight regarding the importance of affective dimensions in spiritual education (Ayubi & Masruri, 2025). The design of *dhikr* routines based on specific Qur'anic verses created emotionally resonant experiences, reinforcing students' religious character formation.

This study also supports the importance of consistency in daily spiritual practices to foster a lasting character (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Kamaludin & Ula, 2019). Observations at PPATQ RF confirm that regular *dhikr* participation nurtures sustained patterns of spiritual behavior, as affirmed by the parents involved in the study (Mulyadi et al., 2021). This study confirms that Qur'an-based *dhikr* practices, rooted in *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26, provide a practical and effective model for religious character education (Ma'arif & Maulana, 2022; Purnanto & Ardhian, 2021). It addresses existing pedagogical structure and content specificity challenges by presenting a replicable model for other Islamic educational institutions (Devecioğlu & Benzer, 2024; Master, 2002; Midilli, 2020). The findings also call for future research with extended duration and broader institutional samples to evaluate this model's long-term effects and generalizability across diverse Islamic educational contexts.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the structured implementation of *Sūrat al-Insān* verses 25–26 through daily *dhikr* practices at PPATQ Raudlatul Falah (RF) significantly contributes to the formation of religious character among elementary school-aged children. A consistent *dhikr* framework—combining physical engagement, affective participation, and spiritual awareness—enhanced children's worship discipline, emotional stability, and reverence in daily practice. Teachers, parents, and observations confirmed that verse-based routines created a sustained rhythm of remembrance, shaping students' humility, patience, and self-regulation. The main contribution of this research is demonstrating that Qur'an-based *dhikr*, when operationalized through specific verses such as *Sūrat al-Insān*, directly fosters holistic and integrated spiritual development. Unlike general *tahfīz* or *dhikr* approaches documented in prior studies, this study presents a structured and replicable model that aligns pedagogy with embodied cognition and daily routines. Practically, the findings highlight the need for educational strategies that move beyond rote memorization toward meaning-centered and affective spiritual education, supported by personalized mentoring and consistent family involvement.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was confined to a single *pesantren* with a relatively small and homogeneous participant group, and

the observation period was limited to one week. These constraints limit the breadth of generalizability and fail to capture long-term developmental effects. The qualitative case study approach emphasizes depth over statistical breadth, limiting causal inference. Future research should broaden its scope by involving multiple institutions, utilizing larger and more diverse samples, and extending observation periods. Longitudinal and comparative studies—ideally incorporating mixed methods—are needed to validate and extend these findings. Such research will help determine the scalability of Qur'an-based dhikr models and their potential to strengthen early religious character formation across varied Islamic educational contexts.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to the leadership, teachers, and students of *Pondok Pesantren Anak-anak Tahfidzul Qur'an Raudlatul Falah* (PPATQ RF) in Pati, Central Java, for their generous cooperation and sincere participation in this research. Special thanks are also extended to the parents of the students, who shared their valuable insights and experiences, greatly enriching the findings of this study.

We are also grateful to the academic advisors and peer reviewers whose constructive feedback significantly enhanced the quality and clarity of this article. Finally, we acknowledge the institutional support provided by UIN Sunan Kudus, which facilitated the completion of this research with academic rigor and integrity.

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