

The Dynamics of Character Building in Adolescents Through Spiritual Strengthening: A Comparative Study in Two Orphanages

Ria Adelina¹, Muaz Tanjung²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

Email: adelina0102211008@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze and compare the dynamics of moral development for adolescents through a spiritual approach at the Al-Wasliyah Orphanage and the Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Medan City. The study focuses on the approach, methods, results of coaching, and supporting and hindering factors faced by each orphanage. The research was conducted using a qualitative approach and comparative analysis of data from interviews and observations. Data were collected through interviews and observations of eight informants, consisting of the orphanage head and resident adolescents. The findings reveal that Al-Wasliyah emphasizes habituation and moral modeling through the emotional relationship between caregivers and children, while Muhammadiyah adopts a more structured, institutional approach involving collective evaluation. This difference creates dynamics in the indicators of moral success: Al-Wasliyah assesses through worship practices and personal attitudes, while Muhammadiyah does so through staff participation and reports. The study emphasizes the need to integrate affective and structural strategies in adolescent moral development. Practically, this research offers insights for orphanage managers to design reflective.

Keywords: Character Building Strategies, Adolescents, Religious-Based Parenting, Strengthening Religious Values

Introduction

The phenomenon of moral degradation among adolescents remains a prominent issue in the fields of education and religious social affairs in Indonesia. Based on its development, adolescence is a phase between childhood and adulthood characterised by biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional turmoil (Isroani et al., 2023). Adolescence is divided into three stages: early adolescence (10–12 years old), middle adolescence (13–15 years old), and late adolescence (16–19 years old). During this phase, adolescents begin an intense search for their identity, making them highly susceptible to environmental influences (Tarwiyyah, 2022). If not properly guided, adolescents are at risk of engaging in negative behaviours such as gang fights, bullying, casual sex, and drug abuse. This reflects a crisis of values within adolescents, which cannot be separated from the weakness of moral and character development.

In both global and national contexts, various studies emphasise the importance of strengthening spiritual values in addressing moral crises among adolescents. In the global sphere, Das, (2024) study highlights the need for empathetic education and mental support for orphans. Heynen et al. (2025) demonstrate that moral education is effective when it involves emotions such as empathy and guilt. Leming (1981) recommends a role-modelling and habit-forming approach in a supportive environment. Meanwhile, Jaffer et al., (2023) show that Islamic education in Malaysian orphanages successfully fosters spiritual discipline and social ethics in children.

However, at the local level, particularly in the context of orphanages as religious social institutions, there has been little research on how moral education is implemented using a spiritual approach. Yet, moral education and spirituality are not merely theoretical issues but real needs to equip adolescents with a strong life orientation and the ability to face the challenges of the times. Character is not merely about manners but reflects integrity and good

character (Wahyuningsih, 2021). Similarly, mature spirituality enables adolescents to draw closer to God, exercise self-control, and deeply comprehend the meaning of life.

Moral issues among teenagers cannot be viewed solely as the result of weak faith or social control. A broader conceptual and institutional framework is needed. In this case, orphanages as religious social institutions play a crucial role that is different from that of families and schools. Orphanages act as a substitute for families with an integrated moral education approach in everyday life. Here, moral and spiritual development is not merely theoretical but is practised in a communal living environment, through equal social relationships, and collective religious practices.

However, the concept of "spirituality" in the context of moral development among adolescents still requires further refinement. Spirituality encompasses the relationship between humans and God, self-awareness and the meaning of life, as well as values and ethics in social relationships. In this study, spirituality is understood as the integration of religious values into the lives of adolescents, manifested through religious practices, the internalisation of values, and social relationships that reflect closeness to God and kindness towards others.

Character development for adolescents must be conducted consciously, systematically, and structurally through guidance, stimulation, and supervision (B. Sari & Ambaryani, 2021). Meanwhile, character is a person's trait that enables them to distinguish between good and bad actions and to determine which actions should be taken and which should be avoided (Sholahuddin & Khoir, 2024). Therefore, moral education through a spiritual approach is defined as the process of building an Islamic personality through etiquette education, the habit of worship, and social exemplary behaviour (Asriyadi & Ziyad, 2025).

In practice, character building cannot be separated from the social environment in which adolescents live. Children in orphanages who come from disadvantaged families or do not have parents need special personality and religious guidance (Sepriana & Yusri, 2023; Tasmara & Kamalia, 2023). Therefore, a spiritual approach becomes the primary means of shaping the character of foster children. Orphanages serve as a second home that must be able to integrate values education into daily life.

Preliminary findings in the field indicate that there are differences in character development methods among orphanages in Medan City. Some orphanages place greater emphasis on formal education, while others focus more on religious activities such as religious study sessions, etiquette training, Quran memorisation, and regular worship. These differences in methods impact the moral and spiritual development of the children. Therefore, it is important to conduct a study that not only describes the process of character development activities but also compares the spiritual approaches in each orphanage.

This study selected two religious orphanages as research subjects: Al-Wasliyah Orphanage and Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Medan City. Both orphanages incorporate Islamic values into their nurturing systems, but each has distinct features and approaches to help foster children improve their moral character and spiritual development. This comparative study aims to understand how differences in spiritual approaches influence the dynamics of moral character development among adolescents.

Conceptually, this study is also positioned in the midst of the discourse on character building among adolescents in the context of religious social institutions, namely orphanages, which have not received much attention. Several previous studies have revealed the importance of values education in orphanages. Kejora et al. (2021) emphasise that instilling Islamic values can shape religious, independent, and integrity-based personalities. Savira (2023) notes that methods such as lectures, discussions, and counselling in religious development have proven to bring about personality changes. Gunawan dan Syamsudin (2023) highlight the importance of formal rules and role models in the success of character formation. Lathifah (2023) found that religious values remain ingrained even after children leave the orphanage. However, these

studies are generally descriptive in nature and have not yet examined comparatively how differences in spiritual approaches affect the results of development.

Thus, this study fills a gap in the literature by examining the comparison of spiritual approaches in the moral development of adolescents in two Islamic-based orphanages in Medan City. The objective of this study is to understand the dynamics of moral development through spiritual approaches applied at Al-Wasliyah Orphanage and Muhammadiyah Orphanage, as well as to assess the extent to which these differing approaches influence the character formation of the children in care. The findings of this study are expected to contribute academically and provide practical input for orphanage managers and related institutions in designing more effective and contextual character development programmes.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research method using a comparative case study approach within an interpretive paradigm. This approach aims to explore the dynamics of character development among adolescents through spiritual strengthening in two institutions: Muhammadiyah Orphanage and Al-Wasliyah. The interpretive paradigm was chosen to understand the meaning of social actions and the subjective experiences of caregivers and adolescents in the context of character development carried out by each institution. In this study, the unit of analysis is the practice of character development in adolescents.

The research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah Orphanage in Medan City and the Al-Washliyah Orphanage in Medan City, which were selected purposively, considering that both orphanages actively run spiritual development programmes but with different approaches and organisational bases.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 informants selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the development process. The research informants are listed in the following table.

Table 1. Research Informants

Orphanage	Name/Initials	age	Role	Length of Stay/ Fostering
Al-Wasliyah	MS	47	Head of Management	12 tahun
	YA	16	Occupant	5 tahun
	M	16	Occupant	3 tahun
	R	16	Occupant	4 tahun
	F	15	Occupant	2 tahun
	G	22	Alumni of the Orphanage	7 tahun
Muhammadiyah	MJ	50	Head of Management	14 tahun
	FB	16	Occupant	4 tahun
	A	17	Occupant i	2 tahun
	B	17	Occupant	3 tahun
	P	16	Occupant	2 tahun
	W	24	Alumni of the Orphanage	6 tahun

The main topics discussed in the interview sessions were the informants' experiences during each coaching activity, their views on moral coaching, and the problems they faced. Before the interviews, the researchers established good relationships with the informants and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality to reduce the effects of "social desirability" and bias. Activities such as religious lectures, congregational prayers, and religious motivation sessions were observed with the help of field notes and observation sheets.

Data analysis techniques were carried out using the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and categorising data based on themes. The data

was then presented in the form of thematic narratives and thematic tables. The cross-case synthesis method was used to compare the mentoring practices in the two orphanages. Analysis was also conducted manually with the help of tables and thematic coding notes.

To ensure data validity, the researcher used source triangulation techniques, which involved comparing information from various informants. Additionally, the study considered ethical aspects, such as obtaining written and verbal consent from all informants and obtaining official permission from the orphanage administrators. The researchers also considered their subjective position as external researchers with no direct connection to the two orphanages, so the data interpretation process was conducted carefully to avoid personal bias.

Results and Discussion

Based on the findings, the two orphanages both place moral development of adolescents as an important part of their vision and mission, but have differences in its implementation. To obtain a systematic and thematic overview, the analysis of the results of this study is organized based on the main themes that emerge from the field data. These themes include the value orientation of coaching, the approach used, the method of activities, the role of caregivers, and the evaluation system. The following table presents a thematic comparison between Al-Wasliyah and Muhammadiyah Orphanages based on the results of interviews and observations.

Table 2. Thematic Comparison of the Dynamics of Moral Development in the Two Orphanages

Tema Utama	Sub Tema	Panti Asuhan Al-Wasliyah	Panti Asuhan Muhammadiyah	Key Quotes	Meaning of Findings
Moral Value Orientation	The purpose of moral values	Instilling manners and independence	Integration of morals and Qur'anic values	"Our vision and mission is to develop children with noble character, independence, and skills." (MS) "Our orphanage's vision is to produce a Quranic generation. We instill five core values: noble character, intelligence, independence, skills, and knowledge." (MJ)	Al-Wasliyah's values focus more on practical etiquette, while Muhammadiyah's are more integrative.
Coaching Strategy	Pattern and Approach	Exemplary, informal interaction	Systematized and scheduled activity structure	"...Children see our example..." (MS) "...Every night there is a night roll call to train discipline and marching." (MJ)	Al-Wasliyah's approach was more naturalistic; Muhammadiyah was more systematic.
Cultivation Method	Variety of Activities	Congregational prayers, tadarus, internal lectures, recitation of the Qur'an, muhasabah, discussion	Congregational prayers, external lectures, mentoring, recitation	"...is a lecture...done every morning... The children...do the lectures." (MS) "...Every month there is also a BSI Maslahat recitation..." (MJ)	Muhammadiyah cenderung outward-looking (eksternal), Al-Wasliyah inward-looking (internal).

Role of the Caregiver	Figur	Like family, close	As a formal mentor	"...the management is considerate..." (YES) "...the management often sets an example for us..." (A)	Caregiver relationships are more intimate at Al-Wasliyah.
Cultivation Impact	Changes in the child's attitude	Orderly, patient, polite, responsible	Disiplin, hormat, religius	"I feel happy because I can learn morals in a light way..." (R) "I became more polite in my speech, easier to control my emotions..." (A)	Both showed positive impacts, but with different patterns of change.
Barriers and Support	Support and Challenges	Caregiver commitment and limited funding	Formal structure and Child psychology	"...lack of encouragement and material or financial support..." (MS) "Must remind children every day..." (MJ)	Muhammadiyah excels in system management, Al-Wasliyah is strong in personal approach.
Sistem evaluasi	Internal Evaluation	Observation of daily behavior	Structured report and observation	"... they will be tasmi or repeat ..." (MS) "The management meets every week ... to convey obstacles related to foster children ... and is immediately applied as homework from the evaluation meeting." (MJ)	Muhammadiyah is more systematic in assessing moral change.

Based on the table above, a detailed description of each aspect will be explained in the following sub-chapters.

Moral Value Orientation in the Development of Orphanage Adolescents

Based on the results of thematic analysis of interviews and observations in both orphanages, it was found that value orientation in fostering adolescent morals is an important part of the vision of each orphanage. However, although both emphasize the importance of morals, there are striking differences in the process of implementing coaching. Al-Wasliyah Orphanage has a strong vision to shape the character of foster children into individuals who are noble, independent, and have life skills. This was confirmed by the Head of the Orphanage, MS, who stated:

"Our vision and mission is to form children who are moral, independent, and skilled."
(Interview, 2025)

This vision is demonstrated in various religious activities such as Qur'an memorization, recitation, yellow book learning, and da'wah training. The emphasis on adab in daily life, the use of Islamic terms of address to caregivers, and the habit of greeting each other, shows a strong cultural-traditional approach. This is in accordance with Al-Wasliyah's ideology, which places morals as a form of social piety (Rahman, 2024). This approach is also in line with Lickona's theory of character education, which includes moral knowing, feeling, and action. (Damariswara et al., 2021). However, the approach applied emphasizes moral action through habituation, because the aspects of knowing and feeling have not been fully measured systematically.

generation that is noble, intelligent, independent, skilled, and knowledgeable. This was conveyed by the Head of the Orphanage, MJ, who stated:

“ The vision of our orphanage is to produce a Qur'anic generation. There are five main values that we instill: noble, intelligent, independent, skilled, and knowledgeable.” (Interview, 2025)

The vision is reflected in structured daily routines, such as waking up at dawn, praying in congregation, tadarus, recitation, assignments, and skills training. Spiritual values and life skills are combined into the management framework to create disciplined and purposeful foster children.

According to the comparative analysis, the value orientations of these two centers differ ideologically and structurally. Muhammadiyah instills morals through the integration of spirituality and rational self-management, while Al-Wasliyah does so through cultural, relational and symbolic approaches. This difference shows the different ways of building morals according to Islamic values in orphanages.

In the context of adolescent development theory, this difference can be explained using Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly the identity vs role confusion stage (Sobh dalam Rusuli, 2022). Al-Wasliyah tends to shape children's identity through symbolic relationships and traditions, such as greetings, role models, daily rites, while Muhammadiyah builds identity through the achievement of success values and skills (achievement-based identity). This finding shows that "morals" is not a single, universal concept, but the result of socio-religious interpretations that are influenced by institutional vision, ideology, and the structure of the coaching program. Thus, moral development in orphanages is strongly influenced by religious symbolism, social control, and disciplinary methods institutionalized specifically in each orphanage.

Moral Development Strategy for Orphanage Adolescents

Based on the results of thematic analysis of interviews and observations at the two institutions, it was found that there are significant differences in the moral development approach between the two orphanages. Al-Wasliyah Orphanage applies a humanistic-spiritual approach, which is characterized by a close relationship between caregivers and children. As stated by MS below:

“Adab towards the caretaker of the orphanage is very important, because adab is above knowledge... Children see our example, so administrators must also maintain adab.” (Interview, 2025).

The statement emphasizes that coaching does not only take place through verbal direction, but also through exemplary and intense daily interaction. This approach is in accordance with the principle of ta'dib according to Naquib Al-Attas, namely education that emphasizes the formation of adab as the core of morals (Permady et al., 2023). In addition, Al-Wasliyah Orphanage also deeply instills spiritual aspects through activities such as dhikr, duha prayers, lectures, and da'wah training, which shows that moral development is carried out through contextual and consistent spiritual strengthening.

However, this approach also has weaknesses, namely the lack of a structured system so that coaching is very dependent on the nature of the caregiver. If the relationship between the caregiver and the child is not warm or consistent, the effectiveness of the coaching may decrease. An approach that is too personalized and loose also risks not being able to build discipline in social life.

In contrast, Panti Muhammadiyah adopts a more structuralistic and behavioristic approach, as confirmed by the Head of the Panti, MJ, below:

“We instill morals from small things... discipline to go to bed at 10 pm, and wake up at 4 am... there is a night roll call to train discipline.” (Interview, 2025).

Routine activities such as evening roll call, marching, and tidy habits are methods to form morals through external control and repetition of behavior. This approach is in line with the findings Nurbaiti et al. (2020) which states that character building can be done through

habituation with the aim of building discipline. Tangible forms of reinforcement are seen in the strict schedule and organized activities. On the other hand, spiritual guidance in Muhammadiyah still exists, but tends to be formal, such as attending monthly recitations organized by outside parties.

In comparison, the coaching pattern at Muhammadiyah Orphanage emphasizes moral regulation, which teaches good behavior based on external rules. Meanwhile, Al-Wasliyah Orphanage educates children to be good from within, with a focus on developing spirituality and inner relationships. This difference not only shows different ways, but also shows two perspectives in understanding morals.

This distinction emphasizes the importance of combining the two moral needs of children, namely their emotional needs and the social needs that demand discipline. Faiz et al. (2022) states that behavior that is initially difficult to shape can develop through consistent habituation. Therefore, character education strategies need to prioritize the habituation process. In this case, Al-Wasliyah Orphanage is more prominent in fostering aspects of affection and spirituality, while Muhammadiyah Orphanage emphasizes behavior formation through a structured and systematic approach.

Moral Development Methods

Based on the results of thematic analysis of interviews and observations at the two institutions, it was found that the moral development methods applied at the Al-Wasliyah and Muhammadiyah Orphanages show differences in terms of approach, intensity, and structure of activity implementation.

Al-Wasliyah Orphanage applies a natural and contextual spiritual strengthening method, prioritizing exemplary, daily worship habits, and religious skills training. Activities such as congregational prayer, morning dhikr, dhuha prayer, reading the Qur'an after Maghrib, and weekly internal lectures become the foundation in instilling moral values. This was conveyed by the Head of the Orphanage, MS, as follows:

"A routine spiritual activity carried out at the orphanage is a lecture. This activity is conducted every morning, once a week. Children from junior high school or senior high school do the lectures. They are given advice, direction and guidance at all times." (Interview, 2025)

This approach is in line with the concept of *uswah hasanah* (good example) in QS. Al-Ahzab: 21, which is the cornerstone of exemplary-based Islamic education. (Wahidi & Syahidin, 2024) also emphasizes the importance of role models in shaping children's moral character. However, this method is not free from problems. It relies on personal caregivers, which makes coaching inconsistent when there is a change of staff. Evaluation is also difficult because there are no clear standards and indicators.

Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah Orphanage applies a more systematic, structured and collective method. Activities such as coming to the mosque before the adhan, *tadarus*, providing motivation *ba'da Isha*, external recitation, and leadership training are carried out strictly with supervision.

"Every night *ba'da Isha*, there is always motivation from the caregivers or administrators. Every month there is also a BSI *Maslahat* recitation, presenting a motivational *ustadz* to encourage children's enthusiasm for religion." (Interview, MJ, 2025).

This approach reflects that applying habituation, repetition of positive behavior, and discipline can shape character. From a social perspective, communal activities such as congregational prayer and group mentoring strengthen the principles of social learning theory (Bandura), where behavior is formed through observation, imitation, and social interaction (Warini et al., 2023).

However, overly systematic methods also carry risks. An excessive focus on routine and control can hinder a deep understanding of values, especially if children are only following out

of obligation, not their personal desires. This can lead to conflicts between formal observance and true spiritual meaning. A comparison between the two homes can be seen in the following comparative analysis table.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of the Methods of the Two Orphanages

Aspects	Al-Wasliyah	Muhammadiyah
Approach	Humanistic, contextual, spiritualization	Structural, molecular, behavioral
Variety of Activities	Zikr, lecture, da'wah, personal recitation	Apple, motivation, recitation, mentoring
Coaching direction	Interpersonal relationships & moral awareness	Discipline collective & control external

The role of caregivers in moral development

Based on the findings in the field, both orphanages show that caregivers do not merely carry out administrative or supervisory functions, but also act as role models, moral guides, and emotional companions for foster children. Although the functions are almost the same, each orphanage's approach shows differences in role structure, relationship style, and level of professionalization of care.

At Al-Wasliyah Orphanage, caregivers play a relational and affective role, which makes them role models in their daily lives. Relationships are informal but intense, so that moral development is more established through close and warm interactions, not just one-way instructions. This daily interaction makes it easier for caregivers to convey moral norms, values and habits to foster children.

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This approach is in line with Al-Ghazali's view that children's morals start from the morals of their educators (Ramadhana, 2021), and reflects a normative-transformative education model that emphasizes exemplary and personal closeness. Researchers also assess that this pattern shows the existence of sustainable coaching management, where caregivers continue to be professionally developed in order to foster children as a whole (Aristayudha et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah Orphanage makes the role of caregivers in a more formal and professional way.

"The first phase of foster care training for caregivers has begun and will continue." (Interview, MJ, 2025)

This approach shows an institutional orientation towards capacity building as part of moral development. This is in line with psychoanalytic theory that places empathy at the center of emotional and social development (Hazani, 2024). The orphanage management is trying to develop a caregiver training system so that they can assist children in a more structured and professional manner. However, focusing too much on the formal system risks reducing the

affective aspect, which is an important component in fostering noble values. The different patterns of caregiver roles in the two homes reflect different coaching approaches.

Al-Wasliyah emphasizes emotional closeness and role modeling, while Muhammadiyah Orphanages is more structured and systematic. However, both still rely on external training (Dinas Sosial), indicating limited internal initiative. This corroborates the view of Berger and Luckmann by Junaidi et al., (2020) which states that individual behavior is shaped by the social structure in which they exist.

The Impact of Moral Development

The moral development carried out by Al-Wasliyah and Muhammadiyah Orphanages shows a significant impact on the development of adolescents' personality and behavior. Although different in approach, both show that the coaching process has an influence in shaping the character of foster children.

At Al-Wasliyah Orphanage, the impact of coaching can be seen in the attitude of courtesy, sense of responsibility, honesty, and empathy. Activities such as recitation, recitation, moral discussions and religious activities take place in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. This shows that moral values can be formed through pleasant emotional and spiritual experiences. As stated by one of the children:

"I feel happy because I can learn morals in a way that is light, but still meaningful. We often discuss together and it's fun." (Interview R, 2025)

This approach reflects the concept of tazkiyatun nafs in Islamic education, which is the process of purifying the soul as the foundation for the formation of noble morals (Maulidiyah et al., 2024). The repetitive and non-authoritarian pattern of coaching is also in line with Al-Ghazali's view that morals are formed through habituation and example, not just orders (Sari & Wantini, 2023). One of the orphanage alumni said:

"What I remember most is how the caregivers treated us with patience. I learned to restrain my anger, learn to be honest, because I saw an example, not because I was told to." (Interview, G, 2025)

Meanwhile, at the Muhammadiyah Orphanage, the impact of moral development is more visible in the regularity of behavior and social discipline. Foster children show an increase in self-control, such as from polite speech to being on time in worship.

"The visible impact is how to walk in front of elders, getting used to not saying dirty words, and there are some children who have not yet arrived at the prayer room." (Interview, MJ, 2025)

This approach is in line with the concept of moral action according to Lickona (1991), which is forming habits through routine and concrete reinforcement (Damariswara et al., 2021).

Examples are the children's attendance before prayer time and their participation in evening roll call and recitation. The real impact was also expressed by A, one of the foster children:

"I have become more polite in my speech, easier to control my emotions, and more caring to my friends around me." (Interview, 2025).

However, this approach runs the risk of producing symbolic compliance due to rules alone, if not supervised the internalization of values that have been applied will not last and even diminish. One of the former foster children of the Muhammadiyah Orphanage revealed:

"I used to be disciplined and obedient, but honestly at first it was only because I was afraid of being scolded. Only as an adult did I understand the importance of it all." (Interview, W, 2025).

The results indicate a tension between moral awareness and external control. Systematic methods have proven effective in establishing order, but often lack the ability to produce deep reflection on values.

When compared, the Muhammadiyah approach emphasizes moral action, while Al-Wasliyah emphasizes moral feelings and moral knowledge. One side builds awareness, the other side builds consistency, both can complement each other. The researcher found that the success of moral development is not only measured by how obedient the children are while in the orphanage, but also by how strongly the values are embedded in the children after they leave the orphanage.

Supporting and Hindering Factors of Moral Development

The success of moral development at Al-Wasliyah and Muhammadiyah Orphanages is inseparable from a number of supporting and inhibiting factors. At Al-Wasliyah Orphanage, motivation from within the child is the main force that supports the success of coaching. Foster children feel enthusiastic about learning morals because these activities are relevant to their needs and feelings. This is in line with Self-Determination theory, which states that internal motivation is formed when the basic needs of individuals for autonomy, competence, and relatedness can be fulfilled (Hamzah, 2020).

Peer support is also a strength that creates a conducive coaching atmosphere. Children encourage each other, build a common culture, and remind each other of their behavior. In line with the findings Waty (2017) who stated that social interaction is important for developing children's morals through the internalization of group and social norms. One informant said:

"My friends are very supportive. We remind each other and encourage each other if someone starts to be lazy to join the activities..." (Interview, YA, 2025).

Al-Wasliyah Orphanage alumni, W, also confirmed:

"I used to participate in activities because my friends were also enthusiastic. But from there I came to understand the benefits. Now I still carry that habit." (Interview, 2025).

This finding suggests that support from fellow residents has a social power that is often more effective than pressure from caregivers.

Meanwhile, at the Muhammadiyah Orphanage, the main supporting factor lies in the pattern of care. A stable fostering system is built by close relationships between caretakers and uniformity of values and rules. This supports Bandura's social education theory which emphasizes the importance of children learning from watching and imitating respected models, especially when values are demonstrated in real actions (Warini et al., 2023).

"Children see how we wake up early, pray, and speak politely. They follow that, they don't just hear advice." (Interview, MJ, 2025).

Alumni of the orphanage, G, said:

"My way of life is management. Be consistent. That makes an impression." (Interview, 2025).

However, these examples are usually one-way and rarely open up space for interaction between caregivers and foster children. This creates an emotional distance that can reduce the level of internalization of their values.

In both homes, the biggest obstacle comes from the psychological factors of children, such as boredom, laziness, or school pressure that makes them lose their enthusiasm to consistently follow moral activities. As expressed by one of the children: "Sometimes I feel lazy, especially if I'm tired or have a lot on my mind." (Interview B, 2025).

P as one of the foster children of Panti Muhammadiyah also expressed the same thing: "Sometimes I feel lazy or tired, especially if there are many activities and close to school assignments." (Interview, 2025).

This shows that coaching cannot be separated from children's daily life and academic responsibilities. Children are not only subjects of moral guidance, but also have psychological conditions that cannot be ignored.

From an institutional perspective, Al-Wasliyah orphanage faces financial limitations, which have an impact on the lack of facilities for further coaching. The head of the orphanage stated:

"The challenges or obstacles faced for now are the psychological factors of children who are lazy and the lack of encouragement and material or financial..." (Interview, MS, 2025).

MS added that the temporary solution is to distribute aid proposals to anyone who visits the orphanage.

At Panti Muhammadiyah, the challenge is not only in the motivation of the children, but also in the psychosocial burden of the caregivers. Although some children are used to coaching, caregivers still have to guide intensively:

"I have to remind the children every day like the caregiver wakes up the children of the orphanage every day." (Interview, MJ, 2025)

This shows that an approach that emphasizes discipline and order still requires the active role of caregivers in guiding and motivating children. In other words, the success of coaching is not enough with the system alone, but also requires a personal touch and a warm relationship between caregivers and foster children.

Evaluation of Moral Development

The evaluation of moral development at Al-Wasliyah Orphanage focuses more on results, especially through *tasmi' tahfiz* as a measure of children's moral and spiritual achievement, with external teachers as the judges. In line with MS's statement:

"When they finish the Qur'an they will be *tasmi* or repeat it again. The orphanage management will bring in a teacher from outside." (Interview, MS, 2025).

This model applies evaluation techniques through Qur'an memorization tests to assess the morals and spirituality of foster children. However, this approach has limitations because it does not necessarily reflect the moral development of foster children as a whole.

Meanwhile, at the Muhammadiyah Orphanage, evaluation is carried out systematically and collectively through regular meetings. The core management holds weekly meetings, while monthly meetings are held with all staff. Evaluation is conducted collectively and participatively, by accommodating input and reports from various elements of the orphanage.

"The management meets every week ... to convey obstacles related to foster children ... and is immediately applied as homework from the evaluation meeting." (Interview, MJ, 2025)

This pattern reflects process-based evaluation, which serves to provide feedback, guide staff, and assess the extent to which tasks have been carried out (Pedhu, 2022). From this process, new strategies are usually formulated and immediately implemented as a form of follow-up. This evaluation model also aligns with the participatory evaluation approach, which involves all parties in the assessment process (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020). Not only caregivers, but also administrative and kitchen staff are involved, creating a culture of collaborative decision-making. However, a weakness of this method is the lack of clear quantitative measures or clear moral indicators. If caregivers lack evaluative training, report-based assessments are prone to bias.

The Al-Wasliyah Home prioritizes a symbolic and normative view in assessing the morals of foster children, while the Muhammadiyah Home focuses on pragmatic and social evaluations. In perspective Yunus et al. (2024), Islamic education evaluation should ideally be able to describe student development comprehensively, covering spiritual, moral, and academic aspects. In this context, the Muhammadiyah evaluation system that uses daily reports and input from various parties shows a reflective and comprehensive approach to the dynamics of moral development.

Conclusion

This study confirms that moral development in the Al-Wasliyah and Muhammadiyah orphanages is effective, despite utilizing different approaches—Al-Wasliyah adopts a personal method based on exemplary behavior and emotional closeness, while Muhammadiyah employs a more systematic and structured strategy. Both institutions successfully cultivate religious attitudes, discipline, and a sense of responsibility in their foster children, with caregivers playing a central role as role models and evaluators through observation-based assessments. Theoretically, this research reveals that children's moral development cannot rely solely on institutional regulations; it also requires strong interpersonal relationships and continuous instillation of spiritual values. The practical implication of these findings is the need for a balanced coaching strategy that integrates both structural and personal approaches, along with caregiver training grounded in spirituality and psychology, a measurable evaluation system, and an environment that supports moral values. For future development, similar studies are recommended in non-religious institutions or within the general community to compare the effectiveness of religious and secular methods in shaping children's character.

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