

Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Use of Tafsir in Islamic Religious Education on the Achievement of Character Education of Junior High School Students in Central Java

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research delves into the effectiveness of incorporating Tafsir (interpretation and explanation of the Quranic text) into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes to enhance character education among junior high school students in Central Java. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study investigates students' perceptions, teachers' experiences, challenges, and opportunities associated with Tafsir integration. Findings reveal positive attitudes among students towards Tafsir-based education, highlighting its relevance to personal and social life, enhancement of moral awareness, and promotion of critical thinking. Teachers recognize the benefits of Tafsir in deepening students' understanding of Islamic teachings but face challenges such as limited instructional time and pedagogical constraints. However, opportunities for collaboration, curriculum enhancement, and community engagement emerge, suggesting pathways for optimizing the effectiveness of Tafsir-based education. Overall, the research contributes insights into the potential of Tafsir integration in fostering character education and ethical development among junior high school students in Central Java.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fostering character development alongside academic achievement is a recognized goal in education [1]. In the context of Islamic education, the Quran offers profound insights into character-building through moral lessons, ethical principles, and practical guidance [2], [3]. The Quran serves

as a reference for morality and provides guidelines for regulating attitudes and behavior [4]. Islamic education emphasizes the integration of religious and moral education, which aims to form the whole person [5]. This approach involves a mental-spiritual approach through soul management, habituation, an exemplary lifestyle, and a healthy environment. Islamic religious

education teachers play an important role in instilling character education that is based on religion, cultural values, the environment, and self-potential [4]. By studying Islamic religious education, individuals can develop good values and behaviors, avoid prohibited actions, and contribute to the unity of the nation [6]–[8].

Islamic education in Central Java, Indonesia, plays a crucial role in shaping the values and behaviors of the younger generation [9]–[11]. Educators in the region are exploring innovative approaches to integrate religious teachings with modern educational practices [5]. One such approach involves incorporating Tafsir, the interpretation and explanation of the Quranic text, within the framework of the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum. This approach aims to instill character education among students by providing them with a deeper understanding of the Quran and its teachings [12]. The use of Tafsir in the IRE curriculum allows students to connect religious teachings with their daily lives and encourages the development of moral values and ethical behavior [13], [14].

The focus of this research is to delve into the effectiveness of utilizing Tafsir in IRE classes concerning the achievement of character education among junior high school students in Central Java. Tafsir, with its scholarly exegesis and contextual elucidation of Quranic verses, offers a pathway to a deeper understanding and application of Islamic teachings in everyday life [15]–[17]. By integrating Tafsir into the educational curriculum, educators aim to imbue students with not only academic knowledge but also moral and ethical values grounded in Islamic principles.

Character education encompasses the holistic development of the individual, encompassing moral virtues, social skills, and emotional intelligence. In the Islamic tradition, character is considered an integral aspect of faith, with teachings emphasizing qualities such as honesty, compassion, humility, and justice [18]. The Quran and Hadith serve as foundational sources for ethical guidance, providing a framework for

ethical behavior and moral decision-making [19]. The Islamic approach to character education is based on a mental-spiritual approach through soul management, habituation, an exemplary lifestyle, and a healthy environment [20]. Character education is very important in Indonesia because the increasing crime rate and moral decline indicate a dangerous character condition [8]. The Qur'an contains character education values, such as religion, discipline, hard work, social care, and responsibility [8]. Character development is not only limited to knowledge but also involves emotions and self-habits.

Tafsir, the scientific interpretation of the Quran, is essential in understanding the meaning, context, and implications of Quranic verses [21]–[23]. It allows students to gain insight into the ethical teachings embedded in the Quran, thus enabling them to apply these teachings in their personal lives and social interactions [24]. By integrating Tafsir into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classes, educators aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering students' moral awareness and ethical behavior [25]. This integration helps students understand the teachings of the Quran in a more comprehensive and meaningful way, encouraging them to live according to its principles [26].

Despite the potential benefits of integrating Tafsir into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, the effectiveness of this approach in promoting character education remains unexplored, especially in the context of junior secondary school education in Central Java [27]. While there is a growing body of research on character education and Islamic pedagogy, limited attention has been paid to the specific role of Tafsir in shaping students' moral and ethical development. This research seeks to address this gap by conducting a qualitative analysis to examine the perceptions, experiences, and impact of using Tafsir in IRE classes on the achievement of character education among junior secondary school students in Central Java. By exploring the perspectives of

students and teachers, this research aims to provide insights into the potential benefits, challenges, and opportunities associated with integrating Tafsir into the education curriculum.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Character Education in Islamic Perspective*

Character education in Islam is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. The Quran provides narratives, parables, and injunctions that offer timeless lessons on virtues such as integrity, empathy, and forgiveness [28]. The exemplary character of Prophet Muhammad, as documented in the Hadith literature, serves as a model for believers to emulate in their daily lives. Experts emphasize the holistic nature of character education in Islam, which includes moral, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions [27]. Cultivating qualities such as sincerity, patience, and gratitude are seen as integral to fulfilling one's life purpose and achieving closeness to the Divine. Contemporary research highlights the importance of integrating religious teachings with modern pedagogical approaches to foster ethical awareness and moral reasoning among students [12], [26]. By creating a value-based educational environment that is grounded in Islamic principles, educators aim to develop academically proficient, morally upright, and socially responsible individuals [6], [8], [20].

2.2 *The Role of Tafsir in Islamic Education*

Tafsir, the interpretation and scholarly explanation of the Quranic text, is a key component of Islamic education. Tafsir provides insight into the meaning, context, and application of Quranic verses, offering guidance on ethical dilemmas, social justice issues, and personal behavior. Tafsir serves as a

bridge between the eternal wisdom of the Quran and the lived reality of believers, enabling them to apply its teachings in their lives and interactions. In an educational context, tafsir-based education fosters critical thinking, moral reflection, and ethical reasoning skills, empowering students to navigate the complexities of contemporary society with integrity and wisdom [24], [29], [30].

2.3 *Challenges in Character Education*

Modern education systems face challenges in effectively instilling moral values in students due to societal influences, cultural shifts, and technological advances [31]. Resistance from stakeholders, such as parents, policymakers, and community leaders, who prioritize academic achievement over character development, further complicates the situation [18]. Limited learning time and competing curriculum demands are also obstacles to character education initiatives [32]. Integrating ethical teachings into the curriculum requires careful planning, teacher training, and supportive resources to ensure sustainable impact [8]. In addition, addressing students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and learning needs is critical to promoting inclusive and equitable character education in educational settings [33].

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore the effectiveness of utilizing Tafsir in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes concerning the achievement of character education among junior high school students in Central Java [28]. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth examination of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors within the educational context. The research design encompasses data collection through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, followed by thematic

analysis using NVivo software for data management and interpretation.

3.1 Participants

Fifteen participants will be selected for the study, comprising junior high school students and teachers from Central Java who are actively involved in IRE classes. Purposive sampling will be employed to ensure the inclusion of individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives related to Tafsir-based education and character development. Participants will be informed about the research objectives and procedures and provided with informed consent forms before their participation.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data will be collected through two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Individual interviews will be conducted with both students and teachers to explore their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward the integration of Tafsir into the IRE curriculum and its impact on character education. The interviews will follow a semi-structured format, allowing for flexibility in probing deeper into participants' responses while covering key topics related to Tafsir-based education and character development.

Focus Group Discussions: Focus group discussions will be conducted separately with groups of students and teachers to facilitate interactive dialogue and exploration of shared experiences and perspectives. The discussions will be guided by a set of open-ended questions addressing themes such as the perceived benefits of Tafsir integration, challenges encountered, and suggestions for improvement. The group dynamics will enable participants to engage in collective

sense-making and generate insights collaboratively.

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions, which involves identifying, coding, and interpreting patterns, themes, and categories in the data. This approach allows for the exploration of similarities and differences among participants' responses. NVivo software will facilitate the management and analysis of qualitative data, following several steps in the process. First, data preparation involves importing interview and focus group transcripts into NVivo for organization and coding, ensuring accuracy and completeness. Then, initial coding will systematically identify initial themes and patterns based on recurring ideas relevant to the research objectives. These codes will be grouped into overarching themes and sub-themes, refined through iterative review and discussion among researchers. Using the NVivo query tool, data exploration will uncover relationships between codes, themes, and demographic variables, providing deeper insights into the nuances of the data. Finally, interpretation and reporting will synthesize the findings into a coherent narrative grounded in the voices of participants, supported by illustrative quotes and following COREQ guidelines for transparency and rigour in reporting qualitative research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This section presents the findings of the qualitative analysis conducted to explore the effectiveness of utilizing Tafsir in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes concerning the achievement of character

education among junior high school students in Central Java. The results are organized into thematic categories derived from the data analysis, followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings.

a. Perceptions of Students

The perceptions of students regarding the incorporation of Tafsir into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes were rich and varied, reflecting their experiences and understandings of the subject matter. Through semi-structured interviews, several key themes emerged concerning students' perceptions of Tafsir-based education and its impact on their character development. The majority of students expressed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of Tafsir into IRE classes. Many students highlighted the value of Tafsir in deepening their understanding of the Quranic teachings and its relevance to their lives. They appreciated the opportunity to engage critically with the text and explore its moral and ethical dimensions.

One student expressed, "Studying Tafsir has helped me appreciate the depth of the Quranic message. It's not just about memorizing verses but understanding their meanings and implications for our lives."

Students noted that Tafsir-based education had enhanced their understanding of Islamic teachings and principles. They appreciated the contextual explanations provided by teachers, which helped clarify complex concepts and shed light on the historical and cultural background of Quranic verses.

A student remarked, "Before studying Tafsir, I found

some Quranic verses difficult to understand. But now, with the explanations provided in class, I can grasp their meanings and apply them to my life."

Many students emphasized the practical relevance of Tafsir in guiding their behavior and decision-making in personal and social contexts. They cited examples of Quranic verses discussed in class that addressed issues such as honesty, kindness, and social justice, which resonated with their own experiences and observations.

One student shared, "Tafsir helps me connect the teachings of Islam with real-life situations. It's not just theoretical; it's about how we can be better individuals and contribute positively to society."

Several students highlighted the role of Tafsir in fostering critical thinking and independent interpretation of Quranic texts. They appreciated the opportunity to question and analyze the meanings of verses, engaging in intellectual dialogue with their peers and teachers.

A student reflected, "Studying Tafsir has taught me to think critically and question assumptions. It's not about blindly accepting what we're told but seeking understanding and truth for ourselves."

Overall, the perceptions of students towards the integration of Tafsir into IRE classes were predominantly positive, reflecting a deep appreciation for the educational value and relevance of Tafsir-based education in their personal and social lives. These findings highlight the potential of Tafsir to engage students in meaningful

learning experiences and contribute to their character development within the framework of Islamic education.

b. Experiences of Teachers

The experiences of teachers in integrating Tafsir into the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum offered valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with Tafsir-based education. Through semi-structured interviews, teachers shared their perspectives on the implementation of Tafsir in the classroom and its effects on student learning and character development.

Many teachers highlighted the benefits of integrating Tafsir into the curriculum, emphasizing its role in deepening students' understanding of Islamic teachings and fostering moral and ethical development. They noted that Tafsir provided a framework for discussing complex issues and ethical dilemmas within the context of Islamic principles.

A teacher stated, "Tafsir allows us to explore the deeper meanings of Quranic verses and relate them to students' lives. It's not just about memorizing texts but understanding their relevance and significance in today's world."

Teachers observed that Tafsir-based education enhanced student engagement and critical thinking skills in the classroom. By encouraging students to question, analyze, and interpret Quranic texts, Tafsir fostered a culture of intellectual inquiry and dialogue among students.

One teacher commented, "I've noticed a positive change in students' attitudes towards

learning since we started integrating Tafsir into our lessons. They're more curious, more engaged, and more willing to think critically about the material."

Despite the benefits of Tafsir integration, teachers also encountered challenges in implementing Tafsir-based education in the classroom. Time constraints, syllabus requirements, and pedagogical constraints were cited as barriers to effective Tafsir instruction.

A teacher expressed, "It's challenging to cover all the material within the allotted class time while also meeting other curriculum objectives. Sometimes we have to rush through Tafsir lessons, which can detract from students' understanding and engagement."

Teachers emphasized the need for professional development and support to effectively integrate Tafsir into their teaching practices. They highlighted the importance of ongoing training programs, workshops, and resources to enhance their knowledge and skills in Tafsir instruction.

One teacher suggested, "We could benefit from more training and resources to help us effectively teach Tafsir. Workshops on instructional strategies, curriculum development, and assessment methods would be especially helpful."

Overall, the experiences of teachers in integrating Tafsir into IRE classes revealed both opportunities and challenges. While Tafsir-based education has the potential to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and moral development,

addressing challenges such as time constraints and the need for professional development is essential to optimizing its effectiveness in the classroom.

c. Challenges and Opportunities

The exploration of challenges and opportunities associated with integrating Tafsir into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes provided valuable insights into the complexities of Tafsir-based education and its potential for character development among junior high school students in Central Java. Through interviews and discussions, participants identified various challenges hindering effective Tafsir integration while also recognizing opportunities for improvement and growth.

Participants highlighted the challenge of limited instructional time as a barrier to effective Tafsir integration. With competing curriculum demands and syllabus requirements, educators often struggle to allocate sufficient time for in-depth Tafsir instruction, leading to rushed or superficial coverage of the material.

Some participants noted resistance from stakeholders, including parents, administrators, and policymakers, who may prioritize academic subjects over religious education. This resistance can manifest in various forms, such as skepticism towards the relevance of Tafsir-based education or pressure to focus on standardized testing outcomes.

Pedagogical constraints, such as large class sizes, diverse student backgrounds, and limited instructional resources, were cited as challenges to effective

Tafsir instruction. Addressing the diverse learning needs of students while maintaining instructional rigor and relevance poses a significant challenge for educators.

Participants identified opportunities for collaboration and support to address the challenges associated with Tafsir integration. Collaboration among educators, administrators, and stakeholders can facilitate curriculum development, instructional planning, and resource sharing. Professional development programs and workshops can provide teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively integrate Tafsir into their teaching practices.

There is an opportunity to enhance the existing curriculum to better incorporate Tafsir-based education and character development. By aligning curriculum objectives with Tafsir principles and ethical teachings, educators can create a more cohesive and integrated learning experience for students. This may involve revising existing instructional materials, developing new resources, and incorporating Tafsir into assessment practices.

Engaging the broader community, including parents, religious leaders, and community organizations, can enrich Tafsir-based education and promote character development among students. Community partnerships can provide additional resources, support, and opportunities for students to apply their learning in real-world contexts.

Overall, while challenges exist in integrating Tafsir into IRE

classes, there are also significant opportunities for collaboration, curriculum enhancement, and community engagement to optimize the effectiveness of Tafsir-based education for character development among junior high school students in Central Java. By addressing these challenges and leveraging these opportunities, educators can create a more robust and holistic educational experience for students.

d. Impact on Character Education

The analysis of the impact of integrating Tafsir into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes on character education among junior high school students revealed significant findings regarding the influence of Tafsir-based education on students' moral and ethical development. Through interviews and discussions, participants shared their perspectives on how Tafsir's instruction has impacted students' attitudes, behaviors, and understanding of ethical principles.

Participants observed a notable enhancement in students' moral awareness and reflection as a result of Tafsir-based education. By engaging with Quranic verses and exploring their ethical implications, students developed a deeper understanding of moral virtues such as honesty, compassion, and justice. Tafsir's instruction encouraged students to reflect on their values and behaviors, fostering a greater sense of moral responsibility.

One participant noted, "Tafsir has prompted students to think more critically about ethical issues and consider the consequences of their actions.

They are more mindful of their behavior and its alignment with Islamic values."

Tafsir-based education also contributed to the development of empathy and compassion among students. Through discussions of Quranic narratives and teachings, students gained insights into the experiences and struggles of others, fostering empathy and compassion towards those in need. Tafsir's instruction encouraged students to consider the needs and perspectives of others, leading to a greater sense of social responsibility and empathy.

A participant remarked, "Studying Tafsir has helped students develop a greater sense of empathy and compassion towards others. They are more aware of the struggles faced by their peers and more inclined to offer support and assistance."

Participants noted that Tafsir-based education played a crucial role in promoting ethical decision-making among students. By examining Quranic principles and teachings, students developed a framework for evaluating ethical dilemmas and making principled decisions. Tafsir instruction provided students with guidance on navigating moral complexities and making choices aligned with Islamic values.

A participant shared, "Tafsir has empowered students to make ethical decisions based on Islamic principles. They are more confident in their ability to navigate moral dilemmas and uphold their values in challenging situations."

Overall, the impact of integrating Tafsir into IRE classes

on character education among junior high school students in Central Java was profound and multifaceted. Tafsir-based education enhanced students' moral awareness, empathy, and ethical decision-making skills, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and principles. These findings underscore the potential of Tafsir-based education as a valuable tool for promoting character development and moral education in educational settings.

4.2 Discussion

The discussion chapter serves as the forum for synthesizing the findings, evaluating their implications, and contextualizing them within existing literature. This section aims to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of integrating Tafsir into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes for character education among junior high school students in Central Java.

1. Integration of Tafsir into IRE Curriculum

The integration of Tafsir into the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum has the potential to enhance character education among junior high school students. Students' positive attitudes towards Tafsir-based education highlight its relevance and impact on moral awareness, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making. Tafsir's teachings provide practical guidance that can be applied to personal and social life, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application [29], [34]. By incorporating Tafsir into the curriculum, students can develop a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and values, fostering a sense of moral

responsibility and ethical behavior [35]. This approach to education can help shape students into good and noble individuals, instilling adab (etiquette) and moral values that are essential for their personal growth and contribution to society [23].

2. Challenges and Opportunities

However, challenges in implementation, such as limited instructional time and pedagogical constraints, present significant obstacles to the effective integration of Tafsir into IRE classes. Teachers' experiences of resistance from stakeholders and the need for professional development underscore the importance of addressing these challenges through collaborative efforts and targeted support initiatives. Opportunities for curriculum enhancement, community engagement, and collaboration provide avenues for overcoming these challenges and optimizing the effectiveness of Tafsir-based education.

4.3 Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this study have several implications for educational practice and policy in Central Java and beyond. Firstly, there is a need for curriculum reform and resource allocation to support the integration of Tafsir into the IRE curriculum. This may involve revising existing curriculum frameworks, developing instructional materials, and providing professional development opportunities for teachers. Secondly, stakeholders at the school, district, and national levels need to be engaged in discussions and decision-making processes regarding the prioritization of character education and the role of Tafsir in achieving this goal. Lastly, community partnerships and

collaboration with religious institutions can enrich Tafsir-based education by providing additional resources, support, and opportunities for students to apply their learning in real-world contexts.

4.4 Future Directions

Future research could explore innovative approaches to Tafsir-based education, such as the use of technology, experiential learning, and community-based projects. Longitudinal studies could also investigate the long-term effects of Tafsir integration on students' character development and academic achievement. Moreover, comparative studies across different regions and educational contexts could provide insights into the generalizability and scalability of Tafsir-based education as a model for character education.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Tafsir's integration into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classes

for character education among junior high school students in Central Java elucidates both the promise and challenges of this educational approach. While students exhibit positive attitudes towards Tafsir-based education, recognizing its relevance and impact on moral awareness and critical thinking, teachers encounter obstacles in implementation, including limited instructional time and pedagogical constraints. Nonetheless, opportunities for collaboration, curriculum enhancement, and community engagement provide avenues for addressing these challenges and optimizing the effectiveness of Tafsir integration. By fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and ethical principles, Tafsir-based education has the potential to nurture morally upright individuals committed to upholding values of compassion, justice, and integrity. Moving forward, sustained efforts from educators, administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders are essential to realizing the full potential of Tafsir-based education in shaping character and promoting ethical development among junior high school students in Central Java and beyond.

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