

## Strengthening the Character Education of Alpha Generation through a Mosque-Based *Maghrib Mengaji* Program: A Qualitative Study

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### ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the behavior and character formation of Generation Alpha, creating challenges for Islamic character education in both formal and non-formal educational settings. As a community-based Islamic educational institution, the mosque has a strategic role in strengthening children's character through religious habituation programs. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program, identify the character values developed, examine the role of the mosque in strengthening character education, and explore the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing the program at Al-Hidayah Mosque, Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving mosque administrators, Qur'anic teachers (*ustadz*), parents, and program participants. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program is implemented systematically through congregational *Maghrib* prayer, Qur'anic learning, *tahsin*, memorization of short surahs, Islamic moral instruction, and continuous religious habituation. The program successfully strengthens religious character, discipline, responsibility, honesty, independence, politeness, and social awareness among Generation Alpha. Its success is supported by collaboration among mosque administrators, teachers, parents, and the local community, while challenges include excessive digital device use, limited teaching personnel, and inconsistent participant attendance. This study concludes that the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program represents an effective mosque-based model of non-formal Islamic education for strengthening the character of Generation Alpha through the integration of Qur'anic learning, exemplary practices, religious habituation, and community participation.

**Keywords:** *Generation Alpha; character education; Maghrib Mengaji Program; mosque-based education; Islamic education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed various aspects of human life, including patterns of social interaction, learning processes, and the character formation of younger generations. Generation Alpha, referring to individuals born since 2010 who

have grown up alongside the rapid advancement of information technology, possesses characteristics that differ significantly from those of previous generations. Easy access to the internet, social media, and various digital devices has created substantial opportunities for knowledge development; however, it has also presented significant challenges to children's character formation. Numerous studies indicate that the use of digital technology without adequate reinforcement of moral and religious values may contribute to declining discipline, social awareness, responsibility, and the quality of children's social interactions (McCrinkle, 2021; Santrock, 2018).

In Indonesia, character education has become one of the government's primary priorities in developing high-quality human resources. Through the Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK) policy, the government emphasizes that character development is not solely the responsibility of schools but also requires the active involvement of families and communities. Character education is understood as a continuous process of internalizing moral values, religiosity, nationalism, integrity, mutual cooperation, and independence through habitual practices in everyday life. From the perspective of Islamic education, character formation is not merely oriented toward the acquisition of knowledge but is also directed toward cultivating noble character (akhlaq) through exemplary conduct, habituation, and continuous religious experiences (Lickona, 2013; Nata, 2017).

One form of community-based character education is the Maghrib Mengaji Program, which is implemented in mosques and prayer halls (musholla). This program aims not only to improve participants' ability to read the Qur'an but also to serve as a medium for cultivating regular worship practices, instilling religious values, developing discipline and responsibility, and fostering positive social attitudes among students. Through activities such as congregational Maghrib prayer, Qur'anic recitation, memorization of short chapters (surahs), Islamic religious instruction, and the practice of Islamic etiquette (adab), the mosque functions strategically as a center of non-formal Islamic education capable of strengthening children's character from an early age.

Al-Hidayah Mosque, located in Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency, is one of the mosques that has consistently organized the Maghrib Mengaji Program for elementary and junior high school students. The program involves mosque administrators, Islamic teachers (ustadz), parents, and community members in creating a religious learning environment. Based on preliminary observations, participants not only receive instruction in Qur'anic recitation but are also habituated to performing congregational prayers, demonstrating proper etiquette toward teachers, respecting their parents, maintaining punctuality, and developing concern for others. These findings indicate that the Maghrib Mengaji Program serves a broader function than merely teaching Qur'anic reading skills; it also acts as an effective means of strengthening character education for Generation Alpha.

Several previous studies have examined character education through religious activities. Samad et al. (2023) found that Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz) programs contribute to the development of students' religious character through the habituation of

worship practices and teachers' exemplary behavior. Muniroh and Kholis (2024) explained that religious extracurricular activities enhance students' religious character and sense of responsibility through continuous habituation. Meanwhile, Nurlatipah et al. (2025) demonstrated that the Maghrib Mengaji Program in Qur'anic learning centers (TPQ) effectively internalizes Qur'anic values through Qur'anic recitation, memorization, and moral development. Nevertheless, most of these studies have focused on school settings or TPQ institutions, while research examining the implementation of mosque-based Maghrib Mengaji Programs in strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha within community settings remains relatively limited.

Based on these considerations, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on positioning the mosque as a center of non-formal Islamic education for strengthening the character of Generation Alpha. This research not only investigates the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program but also analyzes the character values promoted, examines the characteristics developed among participants, and explores how the program contributes to strengthening character education. Therefore, this study is expected to provide both theoretical contributions to the development of community-based Islamic education and practical recommendations for mosque administrators, educators, parents, and policymakers in optimizing the role of mosques as centers for the character development of younger generations.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program in strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha at Al-Hidayah Mosque in Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program in strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha at Al-Hidayah Mosque, Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency. This approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore the phenomenon comprehensively within its natural setting and to understand the experiences of participants involved in the implementation of the program.

The study was conducted at Al-Hidayah Mosque in Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. The research site was selected purposively because the mosque has consistently implemented the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program as one of its religious development activities for children and adolescents. The research participants consisted of mosque administrators, *ustadz* and *ustadzah* (Islamic teachers), parents, and participants of the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program. They were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in the implementation of the program.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program, the

interactions between Islamic teachers and participants, and the character-building practices embedded throughout the learning activities. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with mosque administrators, Islamic teachers, parents, and program participants to explore the implementation of the program, the character values promoted, supporting factors, and its contribution to the character formation of Generation Alpha. Document analysis was conducted to complement the research data by examining activity schedules, attendance records, photographs of program activities, learning records, and other documents related to the implementation of the *Maghrib Mengaji* Program.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data analysis was conducted iteratively from the beginning of the data collection process until the completion of the study, allowing the emerging findings to be continuously refined and verified.

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from mosque administrators, Islamic teachers, parents, and program participants, while methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and document analysis. In addition, member checking was conducted with several participants to ensure that the collected data and the researchers' interpretations accurately reflected the participants' experiences and the actual conditions of the research setting.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESEARCH RESULT**

#### **Implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program in Strengthening the Character Education of Generation Alpha**

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque, Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency, has been carried out systematically and continuously as part of non-formal Islamic education aimed at strengthening the character of Generation Alpha. The program is conducted every evening after the congregational Maghrib prayer and consists of a series of activities, including congregational prayer, Qur'anic reading instruction tailored to participants' abilities, tahsin (improvement of Qur'anic recitation), memorization of short surahs, memorization of daily supplications (du'a), moral education (akhlaq), storytelling on the exemplary lives of the Prophets, and periodic evaluation of participants' Qur'anic reading proficiency. These activities are designed not only to improve Qur'anic literacy but also to cultivate religious habits that gradually shape children's character through continuous and systematic habituation.

The results of observations and interviews reveal that the program is implemented through educational approaches emphasizing exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah), habituation (ta'wid), moral advice (mau'izhah), and continuous supervision by the ustadz throughout the learning process. Participants are consistently encouraged to arrive on time,

wear modest clothing, maintain the cleanliness and sanctity of the mosque, greet others upon arrival, show respect by greeting and shaking hands with their teachers before learning, recite prayers before and after Qur'anic study, and participate in all learning activities in an orderly manner. These habitual practices are implemented consistently, allowing the values being taught to extend beyond religious knowledge and become reflected in participants' daily behavior. Consequently, the Maghrib Mengaji Program serves not only as a medium for Qur'anic learning but also as an effective vehicle for internalizing character values through contextual learning experiences.

These findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program is consistent with the concept of character education, which emphasizes the importance of cultivating positive habits from an early age. According to Thomas Lickona (2013), effective character education should integrate three essential components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. All three dimensions are evident in the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program. Moral knowing is fostered through the teaching of Islamic values and moral principles; moral feeling develops through the habituation of worship and the cultivation of love for the Qur'an; while moral action is reflected in the actual practice of congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, respectful behavior toward teachers, obedience to parents, and concern for others. These findings suggest that character education becomes more effective when it is implemented through repeated habituation within a supportive religious environment.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program also reflects the educational objectives proposed by Abuddin Nata (2017), who argues that Islamic education aims to develop individuals possessing a balanced integration of spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions. Education should not merely produce students who understand Islamic teachings theoretically but should also cultivate Islamic personalities manifested in everyday behavior. Accordingly, Qur'anic learning at Al-Hidayah Mosque extends beyond improving recitation skills to becoming a medium for moral development through the habituation of worship, discipline, responsibility, and respect toward teachers and fellow learners.

The implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program further demonstrates the mosque's significant educational role in children's character development. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the mosque has served not only as a place of worship but also as a center for education, religious propagation (da'wah), community development, and the advancement of Islamic civilization. This historical role remains highly relevant within the context of contemporary Islamic education, particularly as formal educational institutions face challenges arising from rapid digital technological development that influences children's behavior. Through the Maghrib Mengaji Program, the mosque revitalizes its socio-educational function by providing a learning environment that integrates religious education, moral development, and community engagement.

The findings of this study are supported by the research of Samad, Supriadi bin Mujib, and Malik (2023), who concluded that Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz) programs contribute significantly to the development of students' religious character through the

habituation of worship, discipline, responsibility, and teachers' exemplary behavior. Their study demonstrates that Qur'anic learning becomes more effective when it is implemented continuously while integrating moral development throughout the educational process. Similar to the present study, the success of the Maghrib Mengaji Program depends not only on the instructional content but also on the consistent habituation facilitated by the ustadz during program implementation.

The present findings are also consistent with those reported by Muniroh and Kholis (2024), who found that regularly conducted religious activities effectively enhance students' religious character and sense of responsibility through habituation, supervision, and educators' role modeling. Their study emphasizes that successful character education cannot be achieved through incidental instructional activities but instead requires the continuous development of a religious culture within educational settings. This pattern is clearly reflected in the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque, where congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, proper adab, and adherence to community regulations have become an integral part of the participants' shared religious culture.

Furthermore, the findings are reinforced by the study of Nurlatipah, Rohmawaty, and Nasrulloh (2025), which explains that the Maghrib Mengaji Program functions as an effective medium for internalizing Qur'anic character through Qur'anic recitation, memorization, moral development, and active community involvement. Their research highlights that the program's success is strongly influenced by a supportive social environment that consistently provides positive role models for participants. This finding is consistent with the present study, where mosque administrators, ustadz, parents, and community members actively collaborate to establish a religious environment that supports the character development of Generation Alpha. Consequently, the Maghrib Mengaji Program has evolved beyond a Qur'anic learning activity into a community-based character education movement that strengthens collaboration among the mosque, families, and the wider community.

Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque represents an effective model of non-formal Islamic education that integrates Qur'anic learning with character development through continuous habituation, exemplary conduct, and moral guidance. The program's effectiveness is determined not only by the quality of Qur'anic instruction but also by the establishment of a sustainable religious culture involving all members of the community. These findings indicate that the Maghrib Mengaji Program has considerable potential as a model for strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha in response to the challenges of the digital era while simultaneously revitalizing the mosque's traditional role as a center for education, moral development, and community empowerment.

### **Character Values Developed Through the Maghrib Mengaji Program**

The findings reveal that the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque is not solely oriented toward improving participants' Qur'anic reading proficiency but also serves

as a medium for internalizing various character values essential for Generation Alpha. Based on observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, the character values fostered through the program include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, courtesy, independence, and social responsibility. These values are gradually instilled through habitual practices embedded in every stage of the learning process, beginning with punctual attendance, congregational Maghrib prayer, recitation of daily supplications (du'a), Qur'anic reading, respectful behavior toward ustadz and peers, and maintaining the cleanliness of the mosque environment. Character formation is therefore achieved not merely through theoretical instruction but through repeated learning experiences that enable participants to internalize and practice these values in their daily lives.

Religiosity emerges as the primary character value cultivated through the Maghrib Mengaji Program. Regular participation in congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, memorization of short surahs, and the recitation of prayers before and after learning activities strengthens participants' spiritual relationship with Allah. Through continuous practice, these activities gradually encourage children to perceive worship not as an obligation imposed upon them but as an integral part of their daily lives. Furthermore, participants are habituated to showing reverence toward the Qur'an, preserving the sanctity of the mosque, and practicing Islamic etiquette (adab) in their interactions with teachers, parents, and peers. Such sustained habituation ensures that religiosity extends beyond ritual observance and becomes reflected in participants' everyday conduct.

Discipline is another prominent character value developed through the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program. Participants are encouraged to attend according to the established schedule, complete the entire sequence of learning activities, comply with program regulations, and accomplish the assigned Qur'anic reading and memorization targets. These repeated practices foster an awareness that every activity is governed by rules and responsibilities that must be respected. Likewise, responsibility is nurtured through participants' obligation to care for their learning materials, complete memorization assignments, and actively engage throughout the learning process. Honesty is cultivated through direct evaluation of Qur'anic recitation and memorization, encouraging participants to demonstrate their actual abilities without exaggeration or deception. These findings indicate that character education is developed not only through moral instruction but also through consistent practical experiences embedded in everyday educational activities.

From the perspective of character education, these findings are consistent with Thomas Lickona's theory, which argues that effective character formation should integrate moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Character values cannot develop optimally if they are taught merely as abstract concepts; instead, they must be experienced through continuous habituation and authentic practice. The Maghrib Mengaji Program illustrates the integration of these three dimensions. Participants first acquire an understanding of Islamic values through instruction (moral knowing), develop emotional attachment to these values through religious experiences (moral feeling), and ultimately demonstrate them in

daily life through regular worship, discipline, responsibility, and concern for others and the surrounding environment (moral action).

The findings are also consistent with Abuddin Nata's concept of Islamic education, which emphasizes that the ultimate objective of Islamic education is to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character through continuous processes of habituation, exemplary conduct, and moral guidance. Within the context of the Maghrib Mengaji Program, character formation is inseparable from Qur'anic learning; rather, both components complement one another as an integrated educational process. These findings suggest that the success of Islamic education should not be measured solely by students' ability to read or memorize the Qur'an but also by the extent to which positive behavioral transformation and moral excellence are achieved.

The present findings are supported by the study conducted by Khairunisa and Syahidah Rena (2024), which concluded that regular religious activities effectively promote students' religious character through congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation (tadarus), tahsin instruction, collective supplication, and the habituation of Islamic behavior within educational settings. Their study demonstrates that religious character develops most effectively when religious values are consistently integrated into everyday activities. These findings reinforce the present study by confirming that the Maghrib Mengaji Program functions as an effective mechanism for cultivating religious character among Generation Alpha.

The findings are further consistent with the research of Al Haris Muhammad Yusuf, Faridi, and Dina Mardiana (2024), who reported that character education in Qur'anic learning centers (Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an) is implemented through the establishment of an Islamic school culture, habituation of worship, teachers' role modeling, and close collaboration with parents. Their study indicates that Qur'anic learning contributes not only to improving students' Qur'anic literacy but also to developing discipline, responsibility, religiosity, and social awareness. This similarity suggests that successful character education largely depends on the creation of a sustainable religious culture jointly supported by educators, families, and the wider community.

Furthermore, the study by Rieke Dyah Ramadhani Saputri, Isna Ida Mardiyana, and Siska Trisnayanti (2024) found that character education implemented through religious activities effectively develops students' religiosity, discipline, empathy, communication skills, honesty, responsibility, and perseverance. Regular practices such as Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayer, greeting and shaking hands with teachers, and participation in other religious activities positively influence children's character development. These findings strengthen the present study by demonstrating that the character values cultivated through the Maghrib Mengaji Program extend beyond spiritual development to include essential social behaviors required for Generation Alpha in responding to the challenges of contemporary society.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Maghrib Mengaji Program serves as an effective medium for internalizing character values through habituation, exemplary conduct, and meaningful religious experiences. Religiosity functions as the foundational

value from which other character traits—including discipline, responsibility, honesty, courtesy, independence, and social responsibility—are progressively developed. These values are not merely taught conceptually but are repeatedly practiced throughout every learning activity, resulting in positive habits that become embedded in participants' daily lives. Consequently, the Maghrib Mengaji Program makes a significant contribution to strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha through a mosque-based model of Islamic education that actively involves families, educators, and the wider community in an integrated manner.

### **The Role of the Mosque in Strengthening the Character Education of Generation Alpha**

The findings indicate that Al-Hidayah Mosque in Gandawesi Village functions not only as a place of worship but also as a center of non-formal Islamic education that plays a significant role in strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha. Through the Maghrib Mengaji Program, the mosque serves as an educational environment that integrates Qur'anic learning, moral development (akhlak), the habituation of worship, and the strengthening of social relationships among participants. All learning activities are conducted within a religious atmosphere that enables children to acquire both spiritual and social experiences that support character formation. Consequently, the mosque should no longer be viewed merely as a venue for ritual worship but as a community-based educational institution that contributes substantially to the character development of younger generations.

This role is evident in the active involvement of all stakeholders within the mosque community. Mosque administrators are responsible for organizing program schedules, providing learning facilities, and creating a conducive environment for the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program. The ustadz serve not only as Qur'anic instructors but also as role models (*uswah hasanah*) who demonstrate Islamic values through their daily behavior. Parents reinforce the program by supervising and cultivating similar habits within the family environment, ensuring that the character values acquired at the mosque continue to be practiced at home. This synergy among the mosque, families, and the broader community establishes a complementary educational ecosystem that supports the continuous internalization of character values.

The findings further demonstrate that the mosque's role as a community educational center has become increasingly relevant in the era of digital technology. Generation Alpha has been exposed to digital devices and social media from an early age and therefore requires educational environments capable of balancing intellectual development with character formation. The Maghrib Mengaji Program provides a constructive alternative by encouraging children to spend their evenings after the Maghrib prayer participating in religious activities, strengthening direct social interaction, and fostering a close relationship with the Qur'an. Such habitual practices represent a form of preventive education against the adverse effects of excessive digital technology use, including reduced face-to-face social interaction, declining discipline, and the weakening of religious values.

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings are consistent with Abuddin Nata's (2017) view that education is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and the wider community. These three educational environments must work collaboratively to ensure that moral development is comprehensive and sustainable. As an integral component of the community, the mosque plays a strategic role in supporting Islamic education by providing opportunities for the habituation of worship, exemplary conduct, moral guidance, and meaningful social interaction. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Maghrib Mengaji Program depends not only on the quality of Qur'anic instruction but also on the active participation of all community members in cultivating a religious culture that supports students' character development.

The present findings are supported by the study conducted by Choirul Mahfud and colleagues (2024), which concluded that revitalizing the educational function of mosques can strengthen community character education through sustainable religious development programs. Their research explains that mosques function as centers for learning, moral development, religious moderation, and community empowerment. Regular religious activities contribute to the development of religiosity, responsibility, integrity, and social awareness among participants. These findings reinforce the results of the present study by demonstrating that the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque represents a practical implementation of the mosque's educational role in fostering the character of Generation Alpha through structured religious activities.

The findings are also consistent with the research of Nur Hadi and Puput Mulyono (2024), who reported that the success of mosque-based character education is influenced by effective institutional management, sustainable educational programs, and active community participation in religious activities. Their study indicates that well-managed mosques are capable of fostering a religious culture that promotes discipline, responsibility, leadership, and social awareness among participants. Similar conditions were observed at Al-Hidayah Mosque, where mosque administrators actively coordinate the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program, enabling all learning activities to be conducted consistently and sustainably.

Furthermore, Suryanti's (2023) research on mosque-based Qur'anic education programs found that integrating Qur'anic learning with moral development effectively cultivates religiosity, discipline, humility, honesty, and responsibility among students. The success of such programs depends not only on instructional methods but also on teachers' exemplary conduct, the habituation of worship, and the support of a conducive social environment. These findings further strengthen the present study by demonstrating that strengthening the character of Generation Alpha requires a holistic educational approach that integrates learning activities, habituation, role modeling, and community involvement within a mosque-based educational system.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Al-Hidayah Mosque has successfully fulfilled its strategic role as a community-based center for character education. The Maghrib Mengaji Program contributes not only to improving children's Qur'anic reading proficiency but also to fostering a religious culture that nurtures religiosity, discipline, responsibility,

honesty, courtesy, and social responsibility among Generation Alpha. These findings provide evidence that revitalizing the educational function of mosques through well-planned religious education programs represents a relevant model of non-formal Islamic education for addressing the challenges of character formation in the digital era. Accordingly, strengthening the educational role of mosques should continue to be promoted through close collaboration among mosque administrators, families, educational institutions, and the wider community to ensure the sustainability of character education and its broader contribution to the development of future generations.

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program**

The findings indicate that the successful implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque is supported by several interrelated factors. The most significant supporting factor is the strong commitment of the mosque administrators to managing the program in a sustainable manner. Their responsibilities extend beyond providing learning facilities to include organizing activity schedules, coordinating the ustadz, and maintaining effective communication with participants' parents. This well-planned management system has enabled the Maghrib Mengaji Program to be implemented consistently and to become an integral part of the religious culture of the Gandawesi Village community. The program's continuity has fostered a religious atmosphere that supports the internalization of character values among participants.

Another important supporting factor is the competence and exemplary conduct of the ustadz as educators. Based on the interview findings, participants more readily internalize character values because the ustadz not only teach Qur'anic recitation but also demonstrate discipline, patience, responsibility, and courtesy through their daily behavior. Such role modeling establishes positive emotional relationships between teachers and participants, thereby creating a more effective learning environment. Within the framework of Islamic education, exemplary conduct is regarded as one of the most effective educational methods because children tend to learn by observing and imitating behaviors they experience directly. Consequently, the ustadz play a strategic role in fostering the religious character of Generation Alpha.

Family support also emerged as a decisive factor in the success of the Maghrib Mengaji Program. Parents encourage their children to participate regularly while reinforcing the program's objectives at home by cultivating the habit of Qur'anic recitation, reminding children to perform their daily prayers, and motivating them to remain istiqamah (steadfast) in attending the program. The synergy between the family and the mosque creates continuity in the character education process, enabling the values acquired during the program to be consistently practiced in everyday life. In addition, support from the wider community—including maintaining the mosque environment, encouraging children's participation, and contributing to religious activities—further strengthens the successful implementation of the program.

These findings are consistent with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concept of the Three Centers of Education (Tri Pusat Pendidikan), which argues that education occurs through

three principal environments: the family, the school, and the community. In the context of the present study, the educational role typically associated with schools is reinforced by the non-formal Islamic education provided through the mosque, thereby creating a collaborative relationship among families, the mosque, and the community in nurturing children's character. This collaboration demonstrates that character formation cannot be entrusted to a single institution alone but requires the active involvement of all educational stakeholders surrounding the child. The stronger the collaboration among these educational environments, the greater the likelihood of developing positive and sustainable character traits.

Despite these strengths, the study also identified several challenges affecting the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program. One of the most significant obstacles is the increasing use of smartphones and digital media among participants. Many children are more interested in spending their time playing online games, browsing social media, or using other digital applications than participating in Qur'anic learning activities. As a result, some participants arrive late, experience difficulties maintaining concentration during lessons, or attend the program irregularly. These findings suggest that rapid technological development has substantially influenced the learning habits and behavioral patterns of Generation Alpha, thereby requiring more adaptive educational strategies.

Another challenge identified in this study is the limited number of ustadz relative to the number of participants enrolled in the program. Variations in participants' Qur'anic reading abilities require more individualized guidance than the available teaching staff can consistently provide. In addition, the occupational commitments of many parents limit their ability to supervise and support their children's learning at home. Weather conditions and school-related activities also occasionally affect participants' attendance, reducing the consistency of the habituation process. Nevertheless, mosque administrators and ustadz have sought to address these challenges through persuasive approaches, intensive communication with parents, and the development of more engaging instructional methods to sustain children's motivation to participate in the program.

The present findings are supported by the study of Khairunisa and Syahidah Rena (2024), which concluded that the success of character development programs through religious activities depends on the consistency of program implementation, educators' exemplary conduct, family support, and the existence of a religious educational environment. Their research further identified limited parental involvement and the influence of digital media as major challenges to character development. These findings are consistent with the present study, in which collaboration between the mosque and families emerged as a crucial factor in sustaining character habituation.

The findings are further reinforced by the study of Al Haris Muhammad Yusuf, Faridi, and Dina Mardiana (2024), which reported that Qur'an-based character education can be implemented effectively when supported by a strong religious culture, educators' role modeling, parental involvement, and sound institutional management. Conversely, insufficient family supervision and excessive digital media use were identified as significant barriers to the internalization of character values. These findings suggest that the challenges

of character education in the digital era extend beyond instructional methods and require stronger collaboration among educational institutions, families, and the wider community.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program is influenced by both internal and external factors. The program's success is largely determined by the commitment of mosque administrators, the competence and exemplary conduct of the ustadz, parental support, and active community participation in creating a conducive religious environment. Conversely, rapid technological development, limited human resources, and inconsistent participation among some children remain important challenges that require continuous program innovation and strengthened cooperation among all stakeholders. Therefore, the sustainability of the Maghrib Mengaji Program depends upon a collective commitment to ensuring that it continues to function as an effective medium for strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha amid the evolving challenges of the digital age.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the Maghrib Mengaji Program at Al-Hidayah Mosque in Gandawesi Village, Ligung District, Majalengka Regency represents an effective model of non-formal Islamic education for strengthening the character education of Generation Alpha. The program is implemented systematically through the habituation of congregational Maghrib prayer, Qur'anic reading instruction, tahsin (improvement of Qur'anic recitation), memorization of short surahs, Islamic instruction, moral development (akhlaq), and the exemplary conduct demonstrated by the ustadz. This continuous learning process effectively internalizes essential character values, including religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, courtesy, independence, and social responsibility, thereby fostering positive habits that are reflected in the participants' daily behavior.

The successful implementation of the Maghrib Mengaji Program is supported by strong collaboration among mosque administrators, ustadz, parents, and the wider community in creating a religious and conducive educational environment. Nevertheless, the rapid development of digital technology, limited educational human resources, and the inconsistent attendance of some participants remain significant challenges that require collective attention. Therefore, strengthening collaboration among families, mosques, educational institutions, and the community is essential for ensuring the sustainability of the program while optimizing the character development of Generation Alpha.

This study contributes to the advancement of Islamic education by reinforcing the role of the mosque as a community-based center for character education. The findings demonstrate that the Maghrib Mengaji Program extends beyond improving Qur'anic reading proficiency by serving as an effective medium for integrating Qur'anic learning, the habituation of worship, exemplary conduct, and community participation in fostering the character of younger generations. This educational model has the potential to be replicated in other mosques as a practical strategy for strengthening character education in response to the developmental challenges faced by Generation Alpha in the digital era.

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